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MID-VICTORIAN MEMORIES

Mathilde Barbara Bethune. Townsend

1911

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MID-VICTORIAN MEMORIES

By MATILDA BETHAM-EDWARDS
OFFICIER DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE DE FRANCE
ETC. ETC.

WITH A PERSONAL SKETCH BY
MRS. SARAH GRAND

WITH A PORTRAIT

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NEW YORK
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1919

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NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER

By an unfortunate misunderstanding, the letters of Mr. Frederic Harrison in Chapter II. were in type and were passed for press without having been submitted to the writer, and without having obtained his consent to their publication. He wishes it to be understood that the letters were confidential, and often playful, replies to constant inquiries from Miss Betham-Edwards as to his literary work—such as he never contemplated leaving the hands of his old friend.

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MATILDA BARBARA BETHAM-EDWARDS

1837–1919

It is sad to think that the busy little hand which penned *Mid-Victorian Memories* will write no more, sad to think that the writer is numbered now herself among our "Memories."

A melancholy interest attaches to the publication of a last book. Ours is the disappointment of the author. Delight in the doing consists largely in expectation of publication, the crowning moment of achievement. It is hard to be robbed of that moment, and we feel it the harder in this instance because we know how much it would have meant to our friend. She had so looked forward to the event! It might have been her first book, she was so impatient to see it in print. Or she may perhaps have had a presentiment that it was to be her last, and was anxious to lose no time. She had none of the conceit which masks itself in affected indifference to the public reception of a book. A sympathetic review elated, a spiteful one depressed

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her. But these were passing effects. What she treasured in her heart were the congratulations of her friends. And she might well and did rejoice in a letter of thanks and approval from Mr. Frederic Harrison, Henry James, and other eminent friends —though not more than she rejoiced in the response of the undistinguished to whom she had presented copies, provided the undistinguished were dear to her. In regard to the worth of criticism she was discriminating, but she valued cordiality for its own sake, as a measure of affection. At eighty-two and still in harness, still keenly alive intellectually and with all her faculties intact, her record itself courted congratulations, of which she would have had good reason to be proud. Alas! for those who loved her that it had to be not flowers at her feet, but funeral wreaths *In Remembrance*, and at heart the sorrowful sense of "Too late."

She was wont to regret that she had not instantly recorded her own first impressions of the many interesting people she had met: "Don't make my mistake, or you will be sorry for it," she often advised. "Think of Boswell!"

But thinking of Boswell was not persuasive.

A man's best work may soon be put out of date by his successors who improve upon it. Generally speaking, fame lives longest on personality, and personality depends for its preservation on the biographer's power of presentation. The tap-root

of Johnson's fame is his personality; on that he still lives, and Boswell planted it. If there had been no Boswell there would have been little left of Johnson by this time. But who ever wants to be a Boswell? Boswell himself was the enemy of Boswellism. His own personality discounts the credit of his industry, and besmirches its character. We are obliged to him, but we neither like nor respect him. Still, most of us live to regret that we did not keep a modest diary of events. It would have saved us remorse for lost opportunities.

One deterrent is the difficulty of recognising in time among our many "lawful occasions," all so little different, which is an opportunity not to be lost. Recording each as it occurred for fear of missing the one which will eventually prove to have been important, would make huge inroads on our precious time. First meetings seem ordinary enough at the moment; it is subsequent events that make them memorable. Usually they take place on social occasions, when nothing very arresting happens. So-and-so, of whom we had heard, is casually presented, and is very much what we expected—or quite different. Venerable *clichés* are exchanged. He or she may attract or may repel us. Involuntarily we make mental notes, but attach no importance to them. Memory deals capriciously with involuntary mental notes to which we have attached no importance; there is no counting on

what it will single out for distinction and retain, or what let slip; its values are unexpected, and it plays us the oddest tricks.

Glancing at a newspaper one day years ago I chanced to see a letter "To the Editor," signed M. Betham-Edwards. The writer had mentioned me as "my friend, Sarah Grand." Her name was familiar, but I had no recollection of ever having met her. I took her friendliness to be the kindly recognition of a newcomer as a colleague by one looking down from the heights, and thought no more about it. Then came a note from her. She was staying at the Wellington Hotel, Tunbridge Wells, after an illness, to recruit, and had heard from her old friend Mr. Hale White ("Mark Rutherford") that I was at home, and she proposed to pay me a visit—"if it please you, and you will kindly name a convenient day and hour. I always remember with pleasure our first meeting."

I still thought she must be mistaken about our ever having met.

Feeling it proper that I should first pay my respects to a distinguished woman of the previous generation, I went at once to leave a card on her, not expecting to be received, but she sent a messenger hurrying after me as I left the hotel, to call me back. She was standing when I was shown into her sitting-room, and greeted me warmly, but with restraint. Sincerity of feeling is like water,

still on the surface when it runs deep. There was no mistaking her "I am glad to see you" for conventional politeness. She was genuine, that was my first impression.

I can see the little lady as she looked at that moment, her abundant grey hair coiled high on the crown of her head, and cleverly arranged so as to conceal the too great height of her forehead, her grey eyes full of interest, a half smile on her lips; and I recalled my uncomfortable feeling in regard to my own height, as I looked down on her, that I was all out of proportion. It seemed assuming, to be so much bigger in the flesh than a woman who was so much bigger than myself in a finer way. The only detail of her dress on this occasion that I remember is the violet button she was entitled to wear as an *Officier de l'Instruction Publique de France.*

Now that we were face to face I was sure that I had seen her before, but how and when and where?

When she had seated me to her satisfaction on the only comfortable chair in the room—it took some little time, for I was so ill-advised as to dispute my right to it, not knowing then that a favoured friend whom she delighted to honour by forcing him or her (generally him) into the seat she should by rights have taken herself, was obliged heroically to endure to see her uncomfortably

perched while he or she sat at ease, as the only way to please her,—when I had given in for the same reason, she effectively recalled the circumstance of our first meeting, and at the same time unwittingly made me feel ashamed of having thought nothing of an incident which she had so graciously cared to remember: "I have been hoping to see more of you ever since that memorable dinner when I sat next to you," she said.

The words "memorable dinner" acted like pressure on the button of an electric bell—or was it thought-transference? Anyway, there flashed into my mind as in a picture, the details of a complimentary public dinner-party in London, pillars and paint and gilding and mirrors; long tables loaded with plate and glass and cutlery and flowers and fruit; seated guests, jostling waiters; corks popping, wine fizzing and frothing; distracting clatter of knives, forks, plates, and musical instruments; the dominating roar of voices—and the little lady herself, seated beside me, placidly making the best of it.

"I remember," I said.

I remembered perfectly.

The man who was to have taken her in to dinner had not been able to keep his engagement, so it happened that there was an empty chair between us. It would be incorrect to say that she broke the ice, for she gave it no time to form. I

should have hesitated to speak first, partly out of respect for her age, but mostly because by that time I had been taught by sundry unpleasant experiences in London crushes not to take the liberty of speaking to unknown females met haphazard, even at private entertainments. But she was well-bred. She summed me up with a glance as she seated herself, then, leaning across the empty chair, she said easily, pleasantly, in the tone and manner of one who accepts her fellow-guests as equals for the time being and expects to be treated with the same courtesy, tapping the chair as she spoke: "Shall we have this obstruction removed?" We had it removed and drew our chairs close together, and immediately it was as if I had met an old acquaintance, who, without being curious, was interested in all I chose to tell her concerning myself, and took it for granted that I should return the compliment. I remember my reply when I was asked afterwards whom I had sat next "at the big feed": "A bonny-looking, little elderly *gentlewoman*, with all her wits about her. Cultivated. The real thing—'old-fashioned courtesy' and all."

Even then courtesy, which makes the whole difference between grace and charm in social intercourse and the manners of a rabble, was called "old fashioned," and was beginning to attract the kind of attention that would be paid to a sedan chair in the street, or any other revival of an obsolete custom.

She looked at me with a little enigmatical smile when I answered, "I remember," into which my conscience read, "I wonder if you do."

"I couldn't think who you were," she proceeded; "but I inquired and was told, after we parted. Did you know me?"

"No, but I know you now," I confidently plunged. "You are *My Brother's Wife*, and a great many other things."

"Apt in regard to *My Brother's Wife*, but wholly incorrect," she answered drily, and paused, then added, with a resigned little shrug: "'Twas ever thus! You mistake me for my cousin Amelia Blandford Edwards. Naturally. I am moonlight to her sunshine. Our two Bs—Blandford, Betham—caused confusion. We each clung to her B, though we were advised to drop it, one of us. Francis Power Cobbe used to say that we both had Bs in our bonnets. I don't suppose Amelia was troubled with congratulations on being the author of my books. It was monotonously the other way. And I can't say I liked it. Or like it even now."

"Pity me, then," I said.

"What for?"

"It hurts to have hurt."

"It hurts to have hurt," she repeated reflectively, questioning the statement, and paused; then, with a wince, "It does hurt," she confessed.

"Then we are quits?" I suggested.

Whereupon she decided to laugh.

The little conscientious pause to make sure of what she thought of an unexpected proposition was habitual. She was gleg enough at the uptake on occasion, but always, if she had to choose between sincerity and "smartness," the telling repartee promptly delivered or the homely truth on reflection, she reflected.

"Quits then it is," I ventured. "Now we are friends?"

"Sportswomen, eh?" She made a comical attempt to adapt herself to the genus. "Well, I'm game—if that's the right jargon. Here's my hand on it, and we'll wet the bargain."

The bargain was wetted in tea.

There was never any restraint after that, never the least disagreeable difference.

To be met again and again, as she had been all through her career, by new acquaintances, with compliments intended for her showier cousin, when she had so good a right to be known for admirable work of her own, was enough to set up a chronic sore sufficiently painful to make her wince at a touch. The wonder was that it had not changed her feeling for her cousin. It had not. She delighted in Amelia's beauty, her versatility, her achievements, and spoke and wrote of her to the last with the greatest affection.

I had nothing subsequently to alter and little to add to my first impression of Miss Betham-Edwards. She was always the same, courteous, responsive, gentle, punctilious, and essentially sincere, a typical English gentlewoman of the old school. One would rather not date her so, but there is nowhere else to place such women in these rude times, when the conceit of education by promoting tawdry-minded self-assertiveness, and the decline of culture, too often combine in effect to produce so different a type. It is an ugly phase, but only a phase surely. The intrinsic value and beauty of the grace and charm of mind and manners which were the aim of culture in her day cannot be lost. There will be a revival of taste eventually in favour of refinement, as in the case of treasures of art which have been rediscovered by successors to the generation that was insensible to their merits, and had cast them aside as of no account.

In breeding, in culture, in appearance, and in refinement Miss Betham-Edwards was an Englishwoman of the best type—improved by a dash of French blood and intimate association with the French themselves in France. She had none of the stiffness and angularity which so often make Englishwomen repellent. She was delightfully French in her daintiness, her self-forgetfulness, her show of sympathetic interest in and habit of giving her undivided attention to the person she addressed.

And naturally. She did not pose, did not affect to be French either by gesticulating or interlarding her conversation with French phrases—though she often wrote them. She had no mannerisms, but she had little ways of her own and was "set in them" (as we say in the north), and one had to give in to them. She would have things done regularly and in order, in the same order each time, and it did not do to upset it. She was upwards of sixty when I first met her, with a neat figure, and tiny hands and feet. One never thought of her as an old woman, she was so mentally alert, so wonderfully in possession of every faculty. Judging by her early portraits she was one of those fortunate women whom age embellishes. The years gave her more than they took. They left her her delicate complexion and abundant hair, improved her mouth, made her eyes less brightly observant but more sympathetic, and softened her expression with kindliness. She must always have been nice looking, and finally she was pretty.

The instinct of self-preservation was marked in her. She remained efficient to the last by resolutely economising her strength. She tended her faculties like children, clothing them, feeding them, exercising them, and putting them to bed punctually. The morning was her time for work, and of late years she limited herself to two hours a day. It was astonishing how much she accomplished in this short time

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by strict regularity. By the end of the year she had always more to show than younger and more vigorous writers of her acquaintance, who only worked by fits and starts when they felt in the mood. Against "mood" she gave it as her own experience that *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, and instanced Anthony Trollope and Sir Walter Scott. Excellent advice provided the writer who is favoured with flashes of inspiration destroys all that he writes when he is not feeling inspired. Mood is naturally a vagrant, but amenable to discipline; let it rule you and there is no counting upon it; but put it into harness, break it in with whip and spur at your writing-table for a stipulated time every day, and it will end as an obedient servant, ready to respond when it should be on duty. There is no exception to the rule which makes for production of any kind; it is always most haste least speed; bursts of energy culminate in exhaustion and are followed by prolonged intervals of idleness, and the tortoise wins the race while the hare is asleep.

Miss Betham-Edwards lived by rule, and the result justified the habit. She was Spartan in her self-denial, and would forego the pleasure of a visit to a friend if the arrangements to which she was accustomed could not be carried out. Latterly her acceptance of invitations was frankly conditional. She went yearly to stay with two French friends near Paris up to the time of their death, but after

that the only visits she paid were to a friend at Oxford and to our mutual friend Miss Tindall at Tunbridge Wells. This visit should properly have been to me, but when we came to consult about the little lady's entertainment, I felt bound to resign my prior right in consideration of the many advantages she would enjoy at Hollyshaw that could not be procured for her at my house in the town.

I remember that before her first visit to Hollyshaw an acquaintance warned Miss Tindall that she was as exacting as a Royal Personage, and gave examples of her requirements with the comment that one experience of her as a guest would be enough. But Miss Tindall was not to be daunted. Indeed, it was rather with interest than with trepidation that she prepared for the visit. She expected surprises, but she did not anticipate more trouble than it would be a pleasure to take for the comfort of a friend whom she loved and respected. It may seem that the older acquaintance who warned her was justified, but she was wrong in her forecast of the result of the experiment. Miss Tindall's hospitality survived the test, and the invitation was repeated as often as the necessary conditions for a visit could be made.

Acting on the suggestion, Miss Tindall decided to prepare for that first visit as for a Royal Personage, by writing to ask what her expected guest desired for her entertainment and comfort; but Miss Betham-Edwards anticipated her, and their letters

crossed. The characteristic touches in Miss Betham-Edwards' letter are worth preserving. She wrote:

VILLA JULIA, HASTINGS,
4/9/12.

DEAR RACHEL MARY,—I will arrive to-morrow with E. [Emily] in time (I hope) for tea, *i.e.* at Tunbridge Wells by 4.30, and both mistress and maid are looking forward to the visit. Will you, in view of my age and infirmities, excuse me for asking you to let me have cotton, unlavendered sheets on my bed, and only well-worn blankets, the scent of new blankets being very trying to me, also the scent of lavendered sheets.

Also may I ask for dark curtains to the windows, as I like to exclude every particle of light at night. And again, as I should hardly like to bring it with me, may I say that the only wine I drink by medical orders is a glass of very light Chablis at lunch.

And, lastly, will you excuse me if I cannot partake of any good things at your table, being only able to eat the plainest of plain nursery fare, no delicacies whatever.

Pray forgive these particulars, it is on account of them that I have only been able to accept the hospitality of two old friends since my breakdown six years ago. But I feel sure that you will understand how impossible it is for me to do as younger and less worn-out folks do.

Kindest love to self and grand Sarah. Yours ever, M. B.-E.

The following is a Bill of Wants she furnished subsequently for her hostess's guidance:

Kindly asked for particulars of M. B.-E.'s wants:—

"Chablis at dinner, (I always make dinner of other folks' lunch).

"Cotton sheets and not linen on bed.

"Dark curtains on windows.

"Diet—of the nursery order, i.e. *plainest of the plain*, no kind of delicacies, and only plain and very stale cakes.

"For supper a slice of cold mutton, lamb, or chicken. Game I never touch, do. *entrées*, creams, etc., all taboo."

"Isn't that considerate?" Miss Tindall remarked on these precautions. "It would save me many qualms of doubt and anxiety on the subject of my guests' comfort if they would all tell me as frankly what they object to and would like."

Immediately on their arrival Miss Betham-Edwards' beloved maid Emily (beloved by us all, for that matter, in gratitude for the years during which she smoothed the way for our friend by taking on herself every trouble in life of which it was possible to relieve her)—Emily had to set to work to arrange the room her lady had of necessity to occupy at Hollyshaw, to suit her taste,—a hard task considering the difference between the large apartment with its big bay window looking out

upon tree-sheltered gardens and meadows, and the cloistered simplicity of the little bedroom at home which was her ideal of what a bedroom should be. Brightness and tranquillity were what she had aimed at when she furnished it. She had had it papered with golden yellow to give it brightness. Neither pictures nor ornaments would she have, because they caught the eye and gave food for thought, which disturbed the mind. Perfect uniformity, she held, was the secret of tranquillity.

Emily did her best at Hollyshaw to prevent mental distraction by covering certain glossy articles of furniture and all the mirrors with shawls and rugs brought for the purpose. What the servants thought of the room when she had done with it can be imagined. It looked like a gipsy campment.

Then it appeared that Miss Betham-Edwards was peculiarly sensitive to noise. She could not endure a sound in the house from the time she retired to her room for the night until she was about again next day. This difficulty was tackled at once and bravely overcome. At 6 o'clock every evening shutters were closed, curtains drawn, doors locked, and all the racket of shutting up done for the night; and for the rest of the evening, every one playing up gallantly, not a voice was raised and only the stealthiest movements were made all over the house. Next morning, much to the gardeners' annoyance, their usual early work of rolling the

terrace beneath the lady's windows, mowing the lawns, and tidying up generally was stopped, while, indoors, shutters were not opened or curtains drawn until she was known to be awake. Miss Tindall too, in the next room, denying herself the early morning freshness and sunshine, waited patiently in darkness for fear that the rattle of rings on curtain poles and the opening of windows to push back Venetian shutters, should disturb her guest: "And it was worth it," Miss Tindall said.

For never did hostess have a more delightful visitor—she was such good company, so punctilious, so kindly considerate, so appreciative of the least little service. After her visit she would send a message of thanks and a book to every member of that large household, not one was forgotten. And at Christmas each again received a dainty little present from her. She had that grace of nature which commands the heart, and, although "nobody had ever seen such goings on," the maids had vied with each other in their desire to please her, conforming as punctually and pleasantly as she did herself to all that was unaccustomed in the strict ritual prescribed for each day.

When at Hollyshaw it was her habit to pay her respects to her hostess the first thing in the morning by sending Emily to deliver the formula: "Miss Betham-Edwards' love, and she would like to see Miss Tindall in her room, any time after half-past

nine, if Miss Tindall is at liberty." Miss Tindall made a point of being at liberty. This was the time at which they had their most delightful talks together, for the dear old lady, strengthened by her night's rest and stimulated by her breakfast, was then at her best.

The small lady had dignity, the dignity which is founded on self-respect and sustained by the respect accorded to it. She "received" with a becoming sense of her own importance as sufficient to render her immediate surroundings of no account. Not that there was anything in her surroundings that needed an apology. The effect of the "gipsy encampment" was not disorderly but decorative. The room was always well-aired, and the little fire, which she had to have whatever the time of year, brightened it and was appropriate as a finishing touch. Everything about her was dainty and fresh, and she herself in the midst of it was like a little queen holding her court. She would be attired in a beautiful wrapper, with her hair carefully dressed, and on her writing-table the materials for the work she was engaged upon, manuscripts or proofs, would be neatly laid out. This was not a hint to be brief. She liked to dilate upon what she was doing, to give the outline of a story, to read a proof aloud and consult about it. She liked to hear what you thought; but she would have it her own way if your opinion differed from hers.

One morning Miss Tindall was "received" in great perturbation. Cows had been introduced into the meadow opposite the house! During the night? . . . or since she came, Miss Betham-Edwards was sure. But it must have been recently, for they had not disturbed her.

The inference that she confidently expected to be disturbed by them reduced Miss Tindall to despair. The cows were not under her control and she had no power to order them off. But it turned out to be her rest that was broken—by dread of their lowing. For the cows proved to be real ladies. Miss Betham-Edwards herself acknowledged at the end of her visit that they were well-behaved cows, and had been most considerate.

It may be mentioned as an instance of how much sensitive people can do to save themselves suffering by controlling their nerves instead of humouring them and insisting on having them humoured, till they are like children spoilt by being given too much of their own way,—that during her last visit to Hollyshaw, in 1917, Miss Betham-Edwards had evidently been relieved of a good deal of her nervous horror of noise. It was a case of what can't be cured must be endured. The war had obliged her to accommodate herself to a medley of strange sounds, and on this occasion she was able to bear, with at least outward equanimity, even the distracting din made by a party of buglers in

training, all at the same time practising different notes and calls, a daily trial of patience calculated to wring expletives from a Christian martyr.

The next item of the day's ritual, after the morning reception, was the drive before lunch. Punctually to the minute—the little lady was never a moment late for anything—she would come down ready dressed and be piloted across the slippery parquet of the hall by Emily to the carriage. She begged that Emily might be allowed to accompany her, the drive would be such a pleasure to Emily, and what was good for the mistress was good for the maid. She preferred to sit with her back to the horses, with Emily seated opposite, beside Miss Tindall, so that she could see them both. She kept up a lively conversation. Everything interested her, nothing escaped her. She revelled in the beauty of the day, of the landscape, of dark fir woods, of giant forest trees, solitary survivors in the hedgerows, dominating the fields in splendid isolation. But her enjoyment of the scenery did not blind her to the condition of insanitary cottages or evidences of the wasteful neglect of good land. Miss Tindall remembers one specially dramatic occasion after an election when her guest's democratic gorge rose vigorously against aristocratic domination in general and iniquitous landlords in particular, who kept the peasantry in a state of serfdom mitigated by doles at Christmas. Fortunately it did not occur

to her as incongruous to use that particular carriage both for her own enjoyment and as a pulpit from which to denounce the extravagance and luxury of the rich; otherwise there might have been an end to the great benefit her health was deriving in a manner not consistent with her principles.

When she had expended her eloquence and reduced herself to a temporary state of exhaustion she would say to Emily, "Now, Emily, say your little piece to Miss Tindall," and Emily would ask, "Which piece, ma'am?" "Oh, you know," she was reminded, "the one about . . .," and the subject would be given, whereupon Emily obligingly complied. "Very nice," she was invariably applauded, with a gracious little bow, accompanied by the enigmatical smile.

At luncheon the little lady shone in conversation delightfully, as though the drive had sharpened her wits as well as her appetite. One of the items on the list of "Kindly asked for particulars" was "Chablis at dinner (I always make my dinner at other folks' lunch)." She drank her Chablis out of a little ruby-red tumbler of her own which she always brought with her. Doubtless it had a history, but she never told us it. What with slow eating and much talk luncheon was a lengthy function, but it did not seem so to us. Some of her friends thought her conversation better than her books, yet she spoke as she wrote. The difference

was in the reading; she should be read as she spoke. Those who knew her voice hear her in every phrase. Her later style in writing was sprinkled with preciosity and became somewhat archaic. Early impressions are sharpest, and hers prevailed in her later years. The influences that formed her mind gradually became apparent in her style.

"My first educators—could any of mortal born choose better?—were the Bible, Shakespeare and Milton," she tells us in her *Reminiscences*. "Next after this triune splendour, this matchless trinity, come Walter Scott, the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, *Don Quixote* (Smollett's translation), the *Arabian Nights*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Boswell's Johnson*." But her own charm graced their language as she spoke it and made all that she said seem pleasing and appropriate and natural. "Her voice, too," as she herself wrote of a young Quakeress friend of her youth, "was one of uncommon sweetness and feeling, and she spoke with an ease, clearness, and precision that deserve the name of an accomplishment." There was no mistaking "simplicity for baldness" in her case; she suggested more than she said. And it deserves to be noted as a distinction rare in clever men and women, that she never bored one by "talking clever" all the time. Any subject was grist to her mill, from *Welt-politik* to the last fad in dress.

When she talked about books she talked well, thanks to her excellent memory and extensive reading. She cared more for human nature than for abstract ideas. Men and women were more to her than their achievements. The personality of the worker came first, and Herbert Spencer himself appeared in her conversation as of greater importance than Synthetic Philosophy. She would soon pass on from the book that was under discussion to anecdotes about the author, or inquiries, if he were new to her. She took his character and appearance into account to explain his ideas, as on one occasion when she trenchantly observed of a man whose works and ways she detested: "What better could be expected of a glutton who looked like a camel with a monkey's head."

She would never monopolise the conversation; a fair give and take was her principle. Her friends would rather have listened to her, but she was for drawing them out. She had the gift. And that other good gift too, in a listener, of making the speaker happy in the belief that she was finding what he had to say worth hearing.

So the luncheon—her great meal of the day—was a rite to be enjoyed from start to finish. It was as if conversation were the object, and eating an incident. The leisurely consumption of the "Diet —of the nursery order, i.e., *plainest of the plain*, no kind of delicacy," was suspended when she spoke

and only resumed as a profitable pastime in silent intervals, like a piece of work a busy woman ventures to "get on with" in company, because it does not distract her attention. A congenial man added to the luncheon-party had a pronounced effect as a stimulant to mind and memory. One such man, a budding author, young and good-looking, asked to meet her, thanked his hostess afterwards "for the treat." "One does not often meet a woman so altogether charming," he said. Her age had not affected him as in most cases it would have affected a young man in regard to a woman; like the rest of us, he had not thought of her as old.

After luncheon she would retire to her room to rest until tea-time, when she would reappear in the drawing-room, to fortify herself with "only plain, very stale cakes," provided according to order. Then I came on duty to take her for her afternoon walk on her favourite asphalt path. There she enjoyed the shelter of the high hedge on the one hand and the view on the other—the old trees, the delicious green of a rich meadow sprinkled with flowers, a glimpse of gardens, and, beyond all, the hilly ground rising gently to the sky. Often her eyes were lovingly turned to the prospect—the same prospect on which George Meredith's eyes once dwelt, doubtless as lovingly. These were good times for me. Sometimes she introduced subjects on which she knew that we differed, stating

her own point of view dispassionately, for the purpose of hearing mine. She had no desire to convert me. She was one of the signatories of the first petition to Parliament for the enfranchisement of women, but afterwards changed her views and became a passive opponent of the movement. Taking no part in public affairs herself, she had never come up against that bar to progress, "the dead brick wall," of which such great reformers as Josephine Butler, Frances Power Cobbe, Sophia Jex Blake, and her own particular friend Madame Bodichon, complained that it blocked the efforts of women in every direction, and would do so until they procured its only leveller, the vote. Why exactly she had changed her mind she never explained. The remarkable women who first headed the movement were her particular friends and had probably carried her along with them, and it may be that afterwards, when time and distance separated her from them, being no longer under their immediate influence and unhampered in her own personal work for want of the vote, her desire for the enfranchisement of women had lapsed insensibly into unfriendly indifference. The friends she had cared for and respected most were among the prophets, but she had no vocation herself for the fate of a prophet in his own country. The part of onlooker and impartial critic suited her best, though latterly, in regard to women, she was not impartial. Probably,

as her retrospect lengthened, distance had produced the usual effect, and recalling the picked women she had under close observation in her youth, she unfairly compared them, minus their faults, with ordinary modern women whose faults were still too prominently in evidence to be ignored. At any rate, her opinion of women had changed for the worse in the course of time, and during the war the more proof women gave of their worth as citizens the less faith she had in them. She acknowledged that women answer to expectation; but she argued that you could only expect what you had discovered in them, and that experience, by confirming her own views of their pettiness, made it impossible for expectation to remedy their defects.

But it was not often that she argued about anything. She disliked controversial subjects and disposed of them arbitrarily. Her friends knew better than to persist, but strangers ventured and were summarily dealt with. Her temper was quick, but under control, just a flash and over; but in that flash she got home a touch of caustic neatly.

Her sense of humour was always on the alert and her laughter spontaneous, yet one was not "sure to enjoy a good laugh" in her company. She was rather more apt to be quietly witty than to provoke laughter, in a *tête-à-tête*, but she was always interesting. Naturally, when we were alone together, "shop" was a favourite topic. The

fertility of her mind seemed inexhaustible. She carried any number of plans for work clearly arranged in her head — subjects for essays, plots for novels, short stories, and poems. She could relate a short story she intended to write as though she were repeating it by heart. Had it been taken down at the moment there would have been little or nothing to alter. She expected as much of me— vainly. Sometimes a halting attempt stirred her to help me. She had been kindly interested in a book of mine which was designed to have a sequel, and one day on the asphalt path, by way of spurring me on to work, she gave me what she supposed would be my plot. There was no resemblance. It was like listening to some one who had been misinformed about the doings of friends with whom I had kept in close touch. I knew she was mistaken, yet her circumstantial account implanted a doubt in my mind as to which of us were really the better informed. In effect, it disturbed my certainty without convincing me of error, and the sequel was never written.

At six o'clock she retired to her room for the night, and was no more seen, except by the invaluable Emily. Her last simple meal—"For supper, a slice of cold mutton, lamb, or chicken. Game I never touch, do. *entrées*, creams, etc., all taboo"— was sent up to her. She spent the evening in reading or in being read to by Emily. Occasionally she would write an urgent letter or a post card, but

she rigorously forbore even to look at the work she was engaged upon at the moment, once she had put it away for the day.

Her reading was habitually determined by the quality of print and paper. Small print or bad paper she would not look at. "I have my eyes to consider," she said, and she had considered them to such good purpose that her oculist complimented her eyes at eighty on being as good as they were at sixty. She was for having readers strike against bad paper and print for the sake of their eyes—"not to mention their poor brains, which become congested when their eyes are strained to close attention. Middle-aged readers are the principal buyers of books, therefore too valuable an asset for the publisher to trifle with. If only they would abstain from reading anything but good type, there would soon be an end of mean economy in print and paper."

After a visit our little lady was wont to write to her hostess immediately on reaching home, another "old-fashioned" all but obsolete custom which had its uses and its beauties. The following extracts from a letter written after her last visit to Hollyshaw are typical of the punctilious exactness of her acknowledgments:

VILLA JULIA, 11/9/17.

MY DEAR RACHAEL MARY,—Safe home and all the better for your kind hospitality—shall be all the (bodily) better for your most generous hamper of

fruit. I feel filled with the fine air of your woods and with the fine shifting harmonies of forest scenery. Kindly destroy Nannie L. S.'s letter and —if you think well—hand on enclosed to lady reciter. Best love to grand Sarah and on y^r^ knees beg her to keep herself warm. . . . I will also send you—as you like the house decently found in books —one or two of mine in the nice per 3d. editions. I shall try to act on your suggestion and arrange for 3/6 eds. of the best. The difficulty is that the original publisher came to grief or the house changed hands . . . so that I have no interest on their part and no series into which the books would fall naturally. . . No more to-day except to add Emily's heartfelt thanks for all your kindness and also for the kind attention of your household.—Ever affect^ly^ y^rs^, MATILDA BARBARA.

"The Nannie L. S." she mentions was Miss Leigh Smith, sister of Barbara Leigh Smith, the Madame Bodichon who figured with great distinction in the history of her times and in George Eliot's correspondence and Miss Betham-Edwards' *Reminiscences*. The charm of Madame Bodichon's personality, so often lovingly dwelt on in the records of her friends, could be well imagined by those who had the pleasure of knowing her sister, Miss Leigh Smith, whose loss, alas! is being mourned as I write. She was a great lady. And good. The "enclosed" mentioned in Miss Betham-Edwards' letter, which Miss Tindall was to "hand on to the lady reciter"

—"if you think well"—was from Miss Leigh Smith, who was one of the party on the occasion, and unconsciously showed something of her lovely self worth preserving, in a few lines she wrote to "my dearest Milly" afterwards. "Lovely" is here used in the American sense, but even in old age it applied to her physical no less truly than to her inward and spiritual grace.

"Here I am," she wrote, "and up to the ears in duties—first a blind woman to provide for—and lots of other things, so forgive furious haste.

"I send a clever poem, copied by Janet Crowe, which may please the gifted reciter who delighted us all on Sunday—if you will pass it on to her.

"My best thanks to Miss Tindall for so kindly admitting me to her charming gathering—and also in allowing my Bernadina (her Italian maid) to have the delight of seeing her most beautiful garden. . . ."

The "gifted reciter" was our friend Miss Marie Shedlock, who that day (as usual) had generously given us of her best both in French and English.

Recollections of a friend stand not upon the order of their coming, and it is best to take them as they come. There is less in life to be had for the satisfaction of the heart than of the intellect; the intellect is being catered for incessantly, but the heart, nowadays, is usually sent empty away. And it is the heart that is all-important. We owe more

to our friends for their kindness than for their cleverness, and the friends of our hearts whom we lose remain more to us, in death as in life, than the works they leave to us. In thinking of them it is the little distinctive traits which endeared them to us that recur most vividly. The aim of this sketch is to be a portrait of the woman. "Speaking likenesses" are composed of details, trivial in themselves, but necessary for the whole effect. The method is to be defended in the interests of truth. A few sweeping strokes give but a general impression which, like most generalisation, is as often as not erroneous; and the one-sided view of a profile suppresses too much that is of value to be the right kind of half which is better than the whole. Cromwell was right to have his warts painted in; it would not have been Cromwell without them. If the portrait fails of its effect it is not the method but the artist that is at fault, and his excuse may be that the attempt was worth while.

The great moments of life are generally seized upon for a portrait. They may be striking, but they are not representative. Homely circumstances are the test of permanent character; exceptional occasions call for exceptional acts. Habits differ from circumstances in that they may be the outcome either of character or of principle. This makes it dangerous to be inexact in depicting them; there is the danger of giving a wholly wrong and unjust

impression. Miss Betham-Edwards' habits, in so far as they differ from the ordinary, were the outcome both of character and of principle. It is a virtue to mind one's own business; her business was authorship, and she minded it consistently. It is a virtue to be thorough, and she could only be thorough by living for her work on principle. This necessitated rules of life. She turned her instinct of self-preservation to account solely for the benefit of her work. If she has been made to appear selfish in this she has been misrepresented. The selfishness would have been in those who expected her, for their convenience, to be false to her principles by altering the habits which enabled her to live up to them. As it was, she gave too generously of her strength to help and encourage others on occasion. No one was ever a better, more satisfying friend. She never failed one, never disappointed one, never lost touch with one. To the end her interest in all that concerned a friend never flagged, and notes, post cards, and little presents constantly bore witness to her lively affection. Her post cards (often signed "Base and degrading 'Tilda'") shamed the excuse of correspondents who profess to have "no time to write." Time can always be had for the making. One of her post cards would have more that was essential on it in the way of matter of interest and importance to the recipient than many people's longest letters. Ill or well, she

responded instantly and fully to letters, so long as she could hold a pen. On her death-bed, when she could no longer write, she dictated answers to the letters she received, and with the last flicker of her mortal intelligence she sent a cheery message to comfort her friends.

The dear little lady was very woman in her love of pretty things. We always dressed in our best to please her. If we had succeeded, Emily would immediately be called that she might as usual have a share of the pleasure—"Emily, I want you to come and look at the ladies"—and Emily's attention would be directed to the points her lady specially admired. But we could never be certain of success beforehand, for her taste was capricious. Expensive attempts, trophies of a trip to France, were sometimes not favoured with a second glance, while, on the other hand, a little something made at home by our Treasure of the Humble, who came out to work by the day, would delight her.

The easy hour's journey from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings made it possible for us to spend long afternoons with her. We never took her by surprise, or proposed ourselves. It was understood that we should wait to be asked—or, as a friend laughingly put it, "until she held out the sceptre" —then we would be quite sure that she would be glad of a visit. She shared her friends liberally by asking them to meet each other—or anybody whose

acquaintance she thought it would please them to make. There was a ritual for these occasions, so seldom varied that it became an agreeable habit. The rules of procedure were precise. We knew exactly the ordering of events, but never knew what to expect from the company collected for our entertainment, and this sufficed to vary the monotony both at the time and in anticipation. Surprises awaited the kind of person who expected to be asked to meet only "the best people," in the matter of class, for she cared not in the least who anybody was by birth. Social position made no impression whatever upon her. The measure of her respect for her fellow-creatures was the measure of their character, what they were and their accomplishments. She would delight in an intellectual baker, and be frankly bored by a stupid duke.

It was a formidable climb up to her Villa Julia, the house at the near end of the row at High Wickham; but we took the precaution to order a taxi in advance to meet us at the station at Hastings. Half-way up the hill we came in sight of her sitting-room window, and of her watching for us, handkerchief in hand, ready to respond to our signals. We lost sight of her at the steepest bit of the hill—the bit that was so nearly the death of Henry James when he climbed it on foot to save the life of a cab-horse (why didn't he have a taxi?)—but when we rounded the turn she would be standing at the hall

door, with Emily stationed at the little iron gate, waiting to open it. Emily greeted, we ran up the flagged path and were welcomed from the steps with outstretched hands and cheeks presented to be kissed.

Miss Tindall's offerings of home-produce, fruit, flowers, eggs and butter, were lovingly appreciated in the hall, then we were ushered up to the dear little lady's sitting-room. It was frankly the work-shop of a cultivated woman, who had no use for boudoir fal-lals. The dado was bookshelves filled with standard works in several languages. On top of it were crowded rare specimens of china collected in many lands. Above, the walls were covered with pictures, each with a history, but there was only one portrait in the room. She liked to have portraits of her "living friends," but kept them locked up, with the single exception of Dr. Dodson Hessey's, "my good friend and benefactor." She might well make him the exception, for he had been to her what Dr. John Elliotson was to Thackeray, who dedicated *Pendennis* to him in recognition of "constant care and kindness"; what Mr. Buckston Browne was to George Meredith, who called him "the ablest and one of the best of men," and dedicated *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* to him; what Sir Andrew Clark was to George Eliot, "the beloved physician." Should the Roll of Honour kept in the hearts of grateful patients ever be

published, Dr. Hessey's name would be found figuring large among the many gifted and generous men of his profession to whom authors and artists of all grades have owed their lives and more than their lives, namely, the preservation of the intellectual strength which made life worth having.

In Matilda Barbara's sitting-room she loved to be called Matilda Barbara. I shall never forget how her face brightened with surprise and pleasure the first time one of us ventured on it, in inverted commas, as it were. The sound of her Christian name had become strange and was sweet to her, there were so few left who still called her by it, so few who came close enough to have a claim to the right. Age is the lonelier for the formality with which it is treated. In one corner of her sitting-room was a round table covered with the books, papers, and magazines she had in use at the moment; in the opposite corner her pianette stood away from the bookshelves, with the music on it—good music—bearing witness to her taste. The little sofa on which she always sat stood up against the wall on a line with the window. We were placed opposite with a little tea-table between us. There was no escape for me from the one arm-chair close to the fire, but Miss Tindall had a footstool to compensate for the height of her seat. As soon as we were settled in our places, Emily appeared with a tray, on which were two cups of delicious tea, a

box of matches, and a miniature earthenware bowl for an ash-tray, and set it on the table, with the invariable formula: "Just to refresh the ladies after their journey, and madam must smoke her cigarette."

Only two people were privileged to smoke in the house, the beloved physician, of course, because he required the rest and relaxation of a cigarette, and myself—a benign concession to a bad habit, in pity for the weakness of the flesh. And smoke we had to, willy-nilly. There is no satisfaction in a cigarette if one suspects that one's hospitable hostess is enduring rather than enjoying the smell of it. I once tried the experiment of going unprovided, but never again! The plea that I had brought none because it was good for me to go without was scouted as "rubbish," and Emily was dispatched on the instant to borrow cigarettes from the "son of the cottage at the back." His mother would know where he kept them if he was out at work. His mother did know. They were not the brand I usually smoked.

This was the most delightful time, when we had the little lady all to ourselves, and we always wished it had lasted longer. Sitting with her back to the light she beamed on us, happy as a hen with two erratic ducklings safely recovered from the pond. Aged eyes are kind to their friends; the ravages of time escape them. She never looked at us through her spectacles, so to the last, even in the fifth year

of the war, she remained happily unaware of any sorrowful change in us that would have distressed her. When we were alone together she could be as young and merry herself as she thought us. Once when we were talking about what we liked to do best for a diversion, capping an extravagance that had amused her, she said: "What would please me best on a fine summer day would be to be taking tea with a French officer on a Boulevard in Paris, in a new French bonnet." We pictured the French officer proudly delighting in her company as in that *d'une mère bien aimée*; but we exclaimed, "O frivolous! *Qui peut tout dire arrive à tout faire*," and inadvertently gave her a chance, for the phrase cuts both ways. *Qui peut tout dire* when he aspires to do right, *arrive à tout faire* to further his purpose. And gaiety went out in moralising, which culminated in Shelley's sigh:

> "Alas! we know not what we do
> When we speak words!"

Our audience was cut short by the arrival of the guests for tea, whom we were hurried down to meet in the dining-room. She gave us "school-room teas," and it was pleasant to see her enjoying her own hospitality, as it were, in the appetites of the friends she collected round her table. No "plain very stale cakes" for them. The home-made best of everything was somehow provided,

including those wonders in war-time, lump sugar and apricot jam. The difficulty was to satisfy her that you had had enough. It was wise to curb your appetite at lunch if you were going to have tea with Miss Betham-Edwards. Seated in her own particular chair—the chair she describes in her notes upon Henry James—she kept her eyes open to everybody's wants and her ears to their conversation. Should the doctor happen in, nothing would content her but that he should sit in her chair, while she, dethroned, took the first that offered opposite. His predicament and his feelings in the circumstances were well understood by others of the party, and this may have helped to sustain him. At all events he bore himself nobly. Henry James doubtless accepted the distinction in the same spirit of self-sacrifice, and was rewarded in like manner by his hostess's gratification. She had the eyes of a mother for the doctor, a mother with an only son on whose accomplishments she might well pride herself, allowing heredity to account for them. Only once did we see the fair weather of her enjoyment of these occasions overcast, and then —*oh, mirabile dictu!*—it was the doctor himself who raised the wind and caused a squall—with the best intentions. He had been specially asked to meet the author of a recently published book in which he had expressed an interest, the meeting being designed to give him an opportunity he

desired to discuss the book; and, thinking to show his appreciation of the kindness by making the most of it, he devoted himself to the purpose of the interview. The book was a long one, with controversial matter in it, and he picked up the points categorically, with the acumen and accuracy so conspicuous, as a rule, by their absence in the reviews of professional critics. He differed from the author's views in several important respects, but that only relieved the discussion from insipidity. There is help in an impartial difference of opinion, ably stated, for a writer whose only desire is to arrive at the truth; and the author was benefiting. The rest of the party, interested in the animated discussion, were silently absorbed in listening, when from the other side of the table came the plaintive protest: "Never have you said so much about any one of my books!"

It was the woman who spoke, not the authoress. Give the woman your first consideration, and you may lavish your subsequent attention on whom you please—in a matter of the kind.

Our authoress was a great little lady; there was nothing petty about her. She delighted in the success of a colleague *per se*, even when she was not in sympathy with his views. News of a fresh arrival kindled in her the friendliest interest. It was a happiness to her to help on an aspirant to literary fame, and she grudged neither time, trouble,

nor strength for the purpose. She exerted herself to write to me just before the fatal stroke—her last letter—on the subject of a first book for which she was doing her best to help a new writer to find a publisher. The news that the book had been accepted reached her on her death-bed, while she was still conscious enough to understand and show with a smile that she was glad.

She did not show her interest in young writers by reading their books. Her way was to set others to the task, and form her own opinion on a digest; and she was seldom out in her estimate. She detected the brawling conceit of a shallow stream in one young man who was helping to "debase the moral currency." If she had lived to hear of him loudly proclaiming to a companion in the street, for the information of the passers-by: "We are the only writers who have any style!" we should have had her dry little comment: "I thought so!"

Vauvenargues was wrong in her case when he declared that "to praise moderately is a great sign of mediocrity." She did not pay "handsome compliments," but she spoke with that "accent of truth" which makes a few words from those who have it worth treasuring for their weight and meaning. Genuinely diffident souls, in whom extravagant flattery only suffices to inspire a passing gleam of self-confidence and hope, unwarmed by the careful restraint of her calm assurances, felt themselves

sent empty away; yet her sober phrasing had not failed of its intended effect, as they eventually discovered—by finding the impression a lasting source of encouragement.

If not one of the greatest, Miss Betham-Edwards was certainly one of the most remarkable of the group of distinguished women whom we now call Mid-Victorian, both in respect to her own interesting personality and for the long list of her achievements. She had the high sense of the dignity of her calling, and of its moral responsibility common to the choicer spirits of her day. The commercialising of literature, which is nowadays degrading the pursuit of it to the level of a sordid trade, was abhorrent to her. To have tradesmen ordering the product of brains by the inch; to be requested to scamp an idea of its perfect expression in order to make room for advertisements of scented soaps; to place the work of genius itself as a mere adjunct to a display of the wares of enterprising shopkeepers, she rightly regarded as a triumph of vulgar materialism blind even to its own interests, which are best served by catering for the satisfaction of the spiritual needs of mankind. She recognised the necessity of providing for others, which in some cases had subordinated the artist to the tradesman, and deplored it; but she despised mercenariness—the enslavement of mind to money—when the choice lay between that and poverty, with liberty for self-expression. She had

no reason to envy anybody their standing, nor did she—her own was secure. Which is not to say that she was self-satisfied. Nobody who has the power of growth still in them is self-satisfied, for growth is stopped when self-satisfaction sets in. If she could not flatter herself with the assurance that she had done the best that could be done, she was at all events well entitled to rest contented in the certainty that she had conscientiously done *her* best. And she had been fortunate. Talent was not at a discount in her day as it is in ours, and she never suffered the blight of incessant rejection. She came into her own when she was about seventeen, and was received with open arms—if Dickens may be called her own, for it was he who gave her her first five-pound note for a poem entitled *The Golden Bee.* At twenty she succeeded as a novelist with her first work of fiction, *The White House by the Sea*; and at seventy, at the request of her publisher, Mr. Reginald Smith, she wrote a novel —entitled *Hearts of Alsace*—to celebrate the jubilee of her working life. In the meantime she had added to her fame by one novel after another. Mr. Frederic Harrison mentions *Kitty, Dr. Jacob, John and I,* as among her best, but considers that "*A Suffolk Courtship, The Lord of the Harvest,* and *Mock Beggars' Hall* have a special value, even as historic records of 'Old England' in Corn Law days, and they are worthy to stand

beside those of Maria Edgeworth and Mary Mitford."

In 1898 Miss Betham-Edwards wrote in her first series of *Reminiscences*: "Not to many comes the satisfaction of what may almost be called posthumous fame," little dreaming that she herself was to have the still greater gratification of being definitely ranked as a "classic" in her lifetime by the publication of her novel, *The Lord of the Harvest* (first published in 1889), in *The World's Classics*, in 1913. Up to the present most of her novels have been reprinted again and again, and are still selling, but she herself reaped no great monetary benefit from them. She accepted twenty-five copies in payment for *The White House by the Sea*, and never received a farthing of profit for it, though it is still in print. Yet she defended the bargain as equitable "for a young writer."

She was in her eightieth year when the Diamond Jubilee of her working life was celebrated in 1917. In the long retrospect she had nothing to regret and very much which it must have been good to remember. Her novels were but a light part of her output. She had to her credit besides, in the solider parts, some of the best works ever written on French life, organisation, and character. In 1891 the French Government, considering that her writings had materially helped to promote the sympathy and understanding which resulted in the

Entente Cordiale, made her an *Officier de l'Instruction Publique de France.* She was, I believe, the first English officer of the Order. She was also awarded a gold medal for the nine volumes, published over a period of thirty-five years, which she exhibited in the Palace of Women's Work in the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908. From the Government of her own unappreciative country she received no public recognition whatever; and she felt it, for in 1918 she wrote to me—with a wry smile, as it were—"My literary Diamond Jubilee 1857–1918 won't, I fear, bring me my deserts, viz., the title of *Baroness* as accorded to Miss Burdett-Coutts. Any lesser distinction I should refuse, as these are showered upon grocers, bakers, and candlestick makers." Happily she had ample private tokens of respect and affection. Among her regular visitors to the last were many distinguished men. I never heard of any particularly distinguished woman paying her the same pretty attentions in her old age, but that would not strike her as worth mentioning, she so very much preferred the men.

The gallant little lady escaped the trial so many who love their work have had forced upon them in their declining years, the trial of idleness. We dreaded the effect of the war on her. We feared her self-preservative detachment from public affairs —her attitude of merely interested onlooker—would not survive the din of battle, the incessant shock

and jar and horror which must certainly invade even her seclusion. Physically frail as she was there was no knowing what she might not attempt if she heard herself called in the cries for help to which hundreds of thousands of women were everywhere responding at no matter what cost of suffering to themselves. Happily, from the height of her detachment she continued to look down serenely, as the gods look down, on the follies of men. Her active work in the world was done, and she was mercifully left to the repose which had been awarded her on her Mount Parnassus. Moments of anxiety she had for the safety of friends in the danger zone; moments of grief for the havoc wrought, as on one occasion when she wrote: "I weep for Rheims Cathedral as if a star had been darkened in the heavens"; moments of splendid wrath—short squalls these, which burst in vigorous language (generally on a post card), and were immediately succeeded by sunshine in the next paragraph. In one example, dated "22/5/18," after tersely condemning the Huns to eternal perdition in Doric English, the sun shone (in French) on the prospect of seeing us soon again: "Enchantée par l'espoir de vous revoir ici avec la très chère R. M. T. sitôt que la jolie petite fiancée serait mariée. Votre visite, vos visites je dois dire ici, seront des fêtes. Tant d'amis et d'admirateurs viendraient vous rencontrer. La fidèle E. all 'hop, skip, and jump,' at the thought,

and the dear sofa-ridden at W. Croft will be so pleased."

Her attitude in regard to the war was early determined, and, once determined, she mentioned it, as a rule, as we mention the sorrows of others when they do not personally concern us. Except when isolated incidents poignantly affected her, she thought of it as we had been in the habit of thinking of remote wars, in China or Peru, her intellect alive to the tragedy, but her heart untouched—and that was right and best for her, at her great age—and a blessing to the friends whose own heavy burden of anxiety and sorrow was eased by knowing that her peaceful contemplation from her sitting-room window of the view she loved—the green slopes, the red roofs picturesquely huddled below, and the grey church tower outlined squarely against the changeful sea—was untroubled by a too vivid sense of the horrors that were being enacted out there, just beyond.

On a card to Miss Tindall, dated "1/3/15," which begins, "Do write that cleverly suggested paper—how the war affects individuals"— she goes on to say: "The war does not affect me either in mental or bodily powers—the reverse, for I look to it as a universal moral, religious, and intellectual purifier—the dawn (I may not live to see) of a new (lay) religion."

That expression — "a new (lay) religion" —

loosely used because she knew it was safe not to be misunderstood, may be thought to savour of materialism. Judging from many passages in her works such an assumption would be incorrect. Mr. Frederic Harrison, writing in the *Positivist Review*, February 1919, says:

Her close friendship with French Protestants and with leaders of the Voltairian parties made her an uncompromising opponent of the Catholic Church and of clerical teaching. And she was hardly less tolerant of the Anglican Church and its schools. For practical purposes she alluded to the principles which this Review maintains, and was in intimate fellowship with its founders and principal contributors. At the same time, the Voltairian strain in her creed and sympathies withheld her from any formal co-operation with our body. We often found her a zealous fellow-worker, and always a sympathetic friend, whilst she maintained a keen independence in judgment, held on to a passionate belief in her heroes and causes, and by temperament and training was averse to any type of religious organisation.

This is admirably true of her as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. She quarrelled with the Established Church for being a political institution—"that branch of the Civil Service usually called the Church of England," Lord Houghton's witticism, she habitually quoted on subject—instead of being, as it should be, the

the Fountainhead of Pure Christianity. Which is not to suggest that she would have belonged to it even if it had been her ideal of a religious body. The nonconformity in her blood rendered her averse from organisations of every kind; but equally in her blood was Christianity itself—"Christianity, untravestied, unadulterated by Councils and Synods, St. Augustines and St. Athanasiuses." "Theology and theologians have never possessed the slightest attraction for me," she says in her first published *Reminiscences* (p. 339). But theology is not religion; neither is ecclesiasticism. History teems with examples of religious evolution fettered by the tyrannous application of the shackles of dogma, and of the pursuit of truth barred by ecclesiastical intolerance at every step. Religion so hampered is like a forest tree grown in a flower-pot, dwarfed and deformed. Superstition has done its worst to impede progress in every department of life, but only in this, the most important of all, seeing that upon the enlightened conduct of it hinges the worth-while of all else—has superstition succeeded, by blocking inquiry, in checking the acquisition of knowledge and its sane application. The fatal result is that the human race, grown out of the fairy tales which sufficed for its childhood and forbidden to replace them by the stronger pabulum for which it is ripe, is being spiritually starved by the restriction. Miss Betham-Edwards expressed

herself on this subject courageously: "No music ravishes my ears as that of the Salvation Army," she says. "Those hearty strains, heard every Sunday, never fail to stir my pulse with purest rapture. For do they not remind me of our hardly acquired religious liberty, the right enjoyed by every English subject to save or damn himself as he pleases, to regard his salvation, so called, as purely a personal affair as that of choosing a partner in life or a career!"

She was not triumphing here in the special form in which "religious liberty" found self-expression, but in its escape from enslavement. It is significant that, of all the influences she came under in her friendships with distinguished men of all shades of opinion, the following is the one she most gratefully acknowledged:

"A millionaire, as I have always deemed myself in the matter of friendships, how was my capital diminished by the loss of this most beloved and worthily-beloved man! Some of our friends embellish our lives, others build up, one or two beatify. Neither a flower, melody, nor palmer's staff was the close friendship of Dr. Wilson; instead a Scripture, plain to read, bearing the incontestible stamp of finer spirits, souls, in the words of Plato and Spinoza, exempt from the lot of mortality." She goes on to quote as the "keynote of Dr. Wilson's character

struck in early life": . . . "Thank God, we have still a leaven of manly Christian devotion in the world's lump of vexatious vanity; we may yet hope to see our national worship in spirit and in truth within the walls of our churches, where, upon a broad level, rich and poor, old and young, learned and simple, may bow down as brethren in the presence of the God and Father of us all. Here might be a reknitting of that bond of union which is the bond of strength in our social system, now bound by a rope of sand . . . the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of practical Christianity realised in our lives as professed upon our lips."—*Reminiscences*, pp. 335–6.

This passage may or may not embody her own hopes. She makes no comment on it. But that was her way when she approved; it was when she disagreed that she had most to say. Mysticism intrigued her mind, and intellectually she appeared to have the limited outlook of the scientific materialist; but spiritually she was better informed. She could not have written her poems without having experienced "the delightful bathing of the soul in emotions which overpass the outlines of definite thought"—in which her great contemporary George Eliot's mind was washed clean of its doubts. Essentially honest as she was, she would not have republished, towards the end of her life (1907),

hymns full of childlike faith, if she had ceased to believe in the God to whom they were addressed

> "In grief, perplexity, or pain
> None ever go to Thee in vain:
> Thou makest life a joy again,
> God of the weary,"

would have been ruthlessly deleted if it had ceased to be true of her personal experience. The intellect may faithfully describe its acquirements in words, but spiritual perceptions, real as they are to the individual, transcend his powers of expression. It is not an uncommon thing for this difficulty to be evaded by making no effort to subordinate intellectual experience, which consists in the acquisition of secular learning, with the spiritual intuitions with which the soul would have mankind value the product of their minds. Advanced thinkers who are guilty of this evasion tell us sometimes naïvely that they have to keep their "faith" apart in a "separate water-tight compartment" or they would lose it. There it remains unvisited, but at all events safe and intact; but its growth is stopped, so that, at the end of their lives, they are spiritually no further advanced than they were at their mother's knee. Childlike faith is beautiful at any age, but

> ". . . his deserts are small,
> That dares not put it to the touch
> To gain or lose it all . . . "

is felt by the more courageous, probably because, in

their own case, the effect of putting it to the touch was to prove that the danger was imaginary. In too many instances there is reason to mourn the lack of enterprise in this direction which has resulted in the loss to the individual and to the world of all that must have accrued had he seen to it that his spiritual evolution kept pace with his intellectual development.

Miss Betham-Edwards' religion was a natural secretion of her heredity and an integral part of her being. Like the circulation of her blood, it performed its function without attracting special attention on her part to itself. She was reticent on the subject, even to Dr. Hessey, to whom, if to any one, she was most likely to have expressed herself precisely if she had arrived at any precise conclusion. His cultivated psychological sense may be trusted to have formed an accurate diagnosis of her spiritual state from fugitive symptoms, and he could only say, in answer to a question on the subject of her apprehension of a life to come, "I know that she had no fear of the future, though her ideas on the subject were extraordinarily primitive. She would rarely talk on the subject, but sometimes she would lead me on, and then one had to walk warily." Taking his "primitive" to mean the same as my "childlike," we agree in our main conclusion in regard to the faith of our friend.

But if transcendentally her outlook was nebulous,

ethically it was clearly defined. She rejoiced in the belief "that one of the greatest changes of the Victorian era is a progressive moral standard." She perceived that the advance of mankind depends not on scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, artistic triumphs, or commercial success, but on the conquest of their misery-making propensities by the development of their sense of moral obligation. In the conduct of her own life she set a courageous example. In her childhood she had turned to the right, and she kept straight on to the end of her days, however toilsome the way. Her rectitude is as apparent in her work as it was in her social relations. She verified the smallest detail and scrupulously gave the name of every author to whom she was indebted, even for a phrase. All her affairs were regulated with the same punctilious probity, and every obligation punctually met. Decency and order were the rule of her life. In her last will and testament she showed her habitual consideration for others by doing herself everything that she could do to save them trouble. Her directions were explicit and had only to be carried out. She guarded her dignity both in the disposal of her property and in the arrangements she made for the final disposal of her mortal remains. Emily provided for, her one cause for anxiety was removed, and she could face what was to come in undisturbed peace of mind. In her time she had been wiser

than either ant or cigale. One-sidedness had robbed the ant of pleasure in the present and the cigale of safety in the future. Our friend, better balanced, had divided her time between work and play. The one helping the other, she enjoyed both to the top of her bent, and at the same time laid in a rich store of pleasant recollections upon which to browse when strength failed for the continuous active pursuit of either. It is good to think of her in the long precious hours she spent in happy contemplation, sitting out of doors, as we sometimes saw her, in summer, her face beautifully serene, with just that touch of melancholy upon it in repose which is proper to the autumn of life as to the autumn of the year. Content with what she had, satisfied with what she had accomplished, still able to exercise the gifts she had used to such good purpose all her life, out of the crowd but surrounded by devoted friends, the sun may be said to have shone on her throughout the winter of her days till the last.

She declined so gently that no great change in her was observable until 1918. She had been ailing the previous year, but her mind was as active as ever. The following post card is characteristic:

VILLA JULIA, HASTINGS,
19/11/17.

Who wrote *The Schönberg Cotta Family*, etc. etc., Mid-Victorian and a woman? See the other

side. Will answer y^r^ long letter soon. But I have been in bed for several days with cold (or influenza), and only now get half-way downstairs, but hope to begin work to-morrow. The Dr. all cheerfulness and devotion. Yes, as Voltaire said, "Work drives away disease, crime, and *ennui*." Shall look forward to your next. Induce our friend to stick *for the present* to the *petites nouvelles* which she does so well. *Romans* must be short, full of incident and cheerful nowadays, and not too conversational and philosophical, a rattling short story is the thing. Puis-je être utile à elle re short story or novel. I began H. J.'s [Henry James] "Middle Y^rs^," but as I am writing a short biographical novel (date 1864) . . . I am sending the book back *un*read to Mudie, fearful of catching that delightful (in his case) involved style but terrible if caught. . . . I find that it is H. James' "Sense of the Past" I tried to read and couldn't, and I remember now that I did read the passages about G. Eliot in "The Middle Y^rs^."

The early part of 1918 tried her, but in March she wrote buoyantly:

"Haven't been out of the house for months this y^r^. Out once and then slipped down on wet cobble stones—no harm done but a little shaken. Quite well now and just finishing a set of fire-eating short stories (autobiographical) of Germany and France. If the Huns get here I shall be shot, that's certain. Have you read the life of Wilkes—a terrible disreputable; but oh! to have half, a quarter, a grain of his never failing wit!"

We saw her last in July 1918, and found a difference in her, but accounted for it hopefully as the temporary effect of the fall, which had been a greater shock than she pretended. Her memory did not fail her, but it responded tardily to her calls upon it. She had often to pause till the word or name or quotation she wanted recurred to her. Loss of memory to this extent is a common experience during convalescence, we reminded each other. She did revive afterwards, for our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Coulson Kernahan, had tea with her only a week or two before she was stricken, and Mr. Kernahan reported that they had "found her talking as animatedly, as shrewdly, and as wittily as ever. When we threatened to report her to the Food Controller for the sumptuousness of her table, she retorted, 'When I can't afford to ask old friends to tea I'll invite them to morning prayers.'"

We had the happiness of being her only guests on that last occasion, but all the usual dear little ceremonies were strictly observed. Taxis being "off" on account of the war, we had thankfully taken to a little public omnibus known to us as "Black Maria," which plied at set times between the station and the foot of High Wickham hill. When it was time to go the little lady parted from us on the doorstep, with a confident *au revoir*!

As we walked down the green hill in front of the house we had one last glimpse of her standing

at her sitting-room window waving her handkerchief and watching us out of sight. There was a sorrowful foreboding in each of our hearts which made us determine to waste no opportunities we might have of seeing her again; but, alas for us! visits had to be postponed for one reason and another, to our abiding regret, until it was too late. Her last card to "Dearest Rachel Mary" ends joyously:

> "Lovingest greetings to both from
> Base and degrading 'TILDA.

Mid-Victorian Memories out in June. Diamond Jubilee Edition of *The White House by the Sea*, (1857–1918), forthcoming got up regardless of expense.

"Emily's best love and duty to both dear ladies."

She had corrected the proofs of *Mid-Victorian Memories* and begun a new novel, which she told us was to have "the ineffable title of *Bitter Sweet*"; and she had yet another novel projected with a title which was too thrilling to be confided to us in writing, but we were to hear all about it after Christmas, when, for certain, our promised visit was to have been paid. Long before the date she had fixed for it, alas! little hope was left us of ever seeing her on earth again. The fatal illness began with a stroke on the 8th December 1918. On the 4th January 1919, at twenty minutes to four in the afternoon, she breathed her last.

She faced death as she had faced life: "Tell my friends that I am quite cheerful, and tell the doctor that I never lose my good spirits. I mean to keep them to the end"—were the last messages she sent us. Her last words were "loving thanks" to Emily and Mrs. Ransome—her "two guardian angels," as she called them—for all they had done for her to smooth the last little bit of the way. There were to have been "no flowers," but ours had been sent before we were told; and we were glad on Emily's account as well as our own, for it would have hurt to think the cloistered austerity of the room in which she lay was unrelieved by a single token of faithful affection. Emily decided in the matter as she had been in the habit of deciding for the good of her lady in other matters in which they had differed. "I had to give my dear lady your beautiful flowers," she wrote pathetically. "She looks so sweet."

When all was over Dr. Hessey wrote to Miss Tindall: "We shall all miss the dear little lady immensely. It has been a great privilege to have known her so intimately. Hers was an extraordinarily clear mind acting through a remarkable brain. I feel I owe her much.

"After her stroke, which affected her right arm and leg, she remained almost her usual self for some time and took a great interest in her letters, and was always pleased and interested in seeing me and

Mrs. Darent Harrison—I did not allow any one else to see her—who went in to read to her occasionally, but gradually she failed, and during the last few days she was practically unconscious and gently faded away. One cannot be too thankful that life here was not prolonged. . . . For her to have lived on with an enfeebled brain would have been a tragedy."

A brave successful life ending in a brave happy death is good to think upon, and this is our comfort in the present. We do "all miss the dear little lady immensely." We do all "feel that we owe her much." We grieve for that we have looked our last upon her in this earth-life, but we do not grieve as for one who is lost to us for ever. She has only gone on before a little distance, for a little while; and when our time comes and we too pass on through the Gate of Death, we have no fear but that she will meet us on the Other Side, with little hands outstretched, and in her eyes the silent welcome of a great joy.

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MID-VICTORIAN MEMORIES

I

COVENTRY PATMORE

"*The Angel in the House*," the late Professor Beesly said to me a few years ago, "is a book that ought to be put into the hands of every young man on entering life."

Could higher praise be coveted by any poet? I am sorry that Coventry Patmore did not live to hear the compliment, all the more piquant coming as it did from a brand not to be snatched from the burning. That is to say, was he or anyone else logical where theological matters lie nearest their hearts?

Taking him all in all, my neighbour and intimate friend was far and away the most original figure in these memorabilia.

From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot a rank mediævalist, he was born several centuries too late. He ought to have been a contemporary of Saint Simeon Stylites, who spent thirty years on a pillar seventy-two feet high and

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four feet square at the top—a pretty tight residence for a lifetime!—or at least of Saint Francis d'Assisi five centuries later, who walked a whole day through a forest, forgetting all the time where he was; had he been told in a brickfield, he would of course have assented.

More justifiably perhaps than Jean Paul Richter might Coventry Patmore be styled "the only one." The German prose poet, after all, was not out of place in the eighteenth-century Fatherland. The other seemed a contemporary of Dante, Calderon, even of the Troubadours; little indeed of the Victorian gentleman was there about him but his dress. The Franciscan garb in which he chose to be buried symbolised mediævalism of life and character. With Don Quixote, Coventry Patmore had come into the world three hundred years too late. Our epoch, so he perpetually lamented, possessed neither distinction, romance, nor magnanimous opportunity. Sorry medium indeed for any child of song! Yet so ruthless is the logic of facts, his best—may we not aver, his only enduring work?—belongs essentially to the modern spirit he repudiated!

The writer who is not of his own epoch is identifiable with none. Mysticism here had dried the springs of artless fancy. A unique, a brilliant personality remained. The sweet singer in Israel was lost to the world.

It was in 1868 that the poet relinquished his post at the British Museum, married a rich woman, and settled at Hastings, in a house, as he told me, he had coveted all his life. This was a fine mansion at the foot of the East Hill. Built by the fourfold-wedded Lady Waldegrave, the house seemed a veritable shrine of matrimony, a roof-tree under Hymen's especial patronage. The second Mrs. Patmore now installed as mistress was one of Cardinal Manning's wealthiest and most devout converts, who not only swallowed her new creed whole but would fain have had it of much stronger mediæval flavour, as the tragedy of her end will show. Stepmotherhood was not field wide enough for the handsome, imperious mistress of old Hastings House. She should have been an abbess of some convent famed for its asceticism.

A noble old house it is, Georgian in date, its red brick frontage beautified by a trellised magnolia, stretching on the left and raised high above the road, possessing a spacious, well-wooded pleasaunce —garden hardly seems an adequately descriptive word. Few such dwellings are to be found near a large town nowadays, and the new tenant of The Mansion, as it was then called, revelled in a sense of amplitude, retirement, and dignity. Dignity, indeed, characterised the poet's household; distinction was the atmosphere that he brought with him.

It was soon after the poet's settling-down that I was invited to a luncheon given in honour of the event. On entering the drawing-room, my eyes immediately rested on a sumptuous woman standing in the centre of a group; she wore over her black satin dress a gold chain, not round her neck, but, doubtless with some fantastic meaning, encircling her waist. But what at once struck observers was her beaming look of triumph. Well, indeed, from her point of view, might she triumph! Had not the Cardinal's convert been the means of bringing not only her poet, but those belonging to him, within the pale of Rome? That beaming look was always there. A cultivated woman of the world, an ardent *dévote*, she saw everything from one standpoint only. Graciousness she was itself, and fond of society, as she frankly admitted. Upon one occasion, when we had discussed theological questions, fearing that she had not made her meaning transparent, she wrote to me that same evening: "You will understand me when I say that I have more fellow-feeling with an ignorant, dirty old Breton peasant woman who belongs to my religion than with any outsider, no matter how gifted." The word "timid" occurs in Mr. Gosse's three or four lines of characterisation.[1] Never did any woman possess a more imperious will than the second

[1] See his delightful monograph, *Coventry Patmore.*

Mrs. Patmore; never did any more completely wield "all the rule, one umpire." Thus for many years Coventry Patmore submitted to both spiritual and domestic sway. The autocratic rule of his household during that period was strictly a feminine one.

Days of struggle, material and spiritual, were well over. Wedded to a rich, handsome, and in every respect sympathetic wife, with herself, for once and for all, he became an ardent Romanist. Coventry Patmore's lines were now cast in pleasant places. But prosperous circumstances left him in one respect what he had ever been. Like Shakespeare's Thersites,[1] he always loved to be "where wit was stirring." To him, as to rare Ben Jonson, a keen wit was dear as his nutriment. The Open Sesame of The Mansion was lively intellect, mental alertness, suggestiveness: rank, opulence, fashion could not turn the key. Within its walls you breathed an atmosphere of literary eclecticism and simple refinement.

Frank, informal hospitality characterised the fine old house with the magnolias. One pleasant visit was made with a dear Scottish friend, the late Dr. Japp. Just twenty years ago, when staying at Hastings, the co-editor of *Good Words* expressed a wish to make Coventry Patmore's acquaintance.

[1] "I will keep where there is wit stirring and leave the faction of fools."—*Troilus and Cressida*, Act II., Scene i.

On asking permission to introduce my guest, came an immediate invitation to lunch, or rather early dinner. Much enlivening conversation we had at table, and much more doubtless had the two men after they had retired for a *tête-à-tête* and a pipe. In a little volume of poems published for private circulation, I find that Dr. Japp commemorated the day, August 12, 1888, by writing two sonnets, in one of which occurs the line:

"Sweet brotherhood, made one by sorrow's seal."

The duologue had perhaps turned upon subjects too sad and solemn for the family board.

Coventry Patmore delighted to give people little shocks. One day at table, all present being fellow-converts to Romanism but myself, he burst out with: "Nothing is a greater mistake than to think that religion makes folks happy: it makes them miserable. Look at my own case. I had planned a delightful little spree in town with X." (naming a boon companion). "We were going to see this, that, and the other, and have a scrumptious lunch together at the Criterion, when lo! I discovered that the day fixed was Friday, a fast day! So I had to telegraph to X. and mope at home over eggs and potatoes."

He set as much store by genial intercourse as did Montaigne. Whilst living at the beautiful old house at Hastings, a kind of a Harold Skimpole

from America contrived to make the poet's acquaintance. "I said to myself," he told me, "'My fine fellow, you are worth fifty pounds to me; beyond that I shall not go.' He was very good company, and used to tell me most amusing stories of his own adventures in different parts of the world by the yard, not a word of any, I'll vouch for it, being true. I paid some of his bills for him, but when he asked a loan of several hundred pounds I wished him good day.

"That fellow was one of the cleverest I ever came across," Mr. Patmore continued. "One day in the early part of our acquaintance he came to me for advice. His wife had purchased a costume at one of the principal local drapers, but when an assistant was sent for to make certain alterations she packed it up and carried it back to the shop. What should he do? 'Go to Z.,' I said, naming my lawyer; and off he started. 'Summon the people,' said Z.; 'that is what you had better do. But wait—have you paid for the dress? If not, send a cheque and summon them afterwards.' 'On my word, I never thought of that,' exclaimed the other innocently; 'and as I don't happen to have my purse, just oblige me with your cheque for the amount.' And I'll be hanged," added Coventry Patmore, chuckling, "if he didn't bamboozle the lawyer. Instead of stepping over the way, he went

straight home. The dress was never paid for, and Z. never got back his money!"

To the very last Coventry Patmore worshipped at the shrine of grace and beauty. A few years before he died he was introduced to a charming young lady at my house, and whenever we met afterwards he became dithyrambic about her. She married a little later, and I begged his autograph for a copy of his poems I had bought as a wedding gift. He thus quoted himself under a pretty inscription:

> "Nature to you was more than kind.
> What fond perversity to dress
> So much simplicity of mind
> In such a wealth of loveliness!"

But the compliment was felt to be overwhelming, and the volume did not appear with the other wedding gifts.

"The waters of Shiloh that go softly" were to be rudely disturbed. The Mansion had changed hands, and was wanted as a residence by its new owner. All the heavier fell the blow because over against his much-loved home Coventry Patmore had raised a handsome church in memory of his second wife, thus creating a little Catholic centre, in which he naturally occupied a foremost place. He had made many friends, too, among non-Catholics, and loved the quaint old seaboard town. Hastings also regretted the loss of the poet. Cassell's threepenny

edition of *The Angel in the House* had popularised the poem among all classes. The townsfolk would turn to gaze on the tall, attenuated, erect figure in black velvet with the striking countenance as he stalked along, holding by the hand a miniature of himself, the little son born of his third marriage. There were keen regrets on both sides. The poet forfeited an ideal abode: Hastings lost distinction. But the thing had to be done, and after much painful journeying to and fro a suitable retreat for one so fastidious was found at Lymington. The house, flanked by an old-world garden, overlooked the Solent, and was roomy, irregular, and secluded —a very fair substitute for the Georgian mansion with the magnolia. One drawback was the distance from the little church, which had to be reached by a ferry-boat. Shortly after the family installation, I was invited for a few days, and memorable days they were. Never had I found Coventry Patmore in livelier, more paradoxical mood, more thoroughly himself. As good a listener as he was a talker, he always spurred on other folk's wits; and although a bottomless gulf of antipodean opinion divided us, we loved each other dearly.

He would say to me when I was his guest, "Now come into my study, and have a pipe and a glass of beer." The pipe and glass might be declined, but the *tête-à-tête* was, of course, irresistible. A first-rate story-teller, full of literary

reminiscence, an original and epigrammatic but wayward critic, Coventry Patmore only needed a suggestive remark or apt question, and his talk would flow in a brilliant unbroken stream. As the blue tobacco fumes curled upwards, and the strange, lank, sardonic figure of the speaker became partly obscured, his listener would forget the man in the potency of the voice—a voice mysterious, penetrating, Dantesque, belonging not to one of ourselves, but to the olden time, an echo of the grand old days, "the days that are no more."

Here are a few jottings, mere crumbs from the rich man's table, which may give some idea of his table-talk. He had known Carlyle well, and was fond of talking about him. "Why," I asked one evening, "should Carlyle have written his *French Revolution* in the chaotic, parenthetic style of Jean Paul Richter, every sentence being a Chinese puzzle?" "Why?" he replied. "Because to put all that he had to say in clear, matter-of-fact prose would have required twenty pages instead of one. His book suited the theme: it is in itself a revolution!"

"The lack of our age is distinction," he said at another time. "What opportunity is there in these days for heroism, or in literature for really great work? Writers cannot say what they would. Some of the great books of the world are coarse. Look at Othello, Dante, Calderon—

who in the present time could dare to write as freely?"

Then, sadly enough, he went on to tell me that the manuscript of a mystical poem—his best work, he considered it—had lately been burnt. "My spiritual adviser, Father ——, disapproved of publication," he added, with a rueful face and deep-drawn sigh.

It was in the modern novel that Coventry Patmore found mental recreation, not in stories written with a purpose, but in natural pictures of life. The super-sensuous, psychological fiction now in fashion had not as yet supplanted former ideals, and would most assuredly have been anathematised by the poet. With one or two startling exceptions, the lady novelists of the Victorian epoch were his favourite reading. To the Brontë sisters he was whimsically antipathetic. On the other hand, he once said to me, "I could name a hundred novels of our day each in its way as perfect as *Paradise Lost*," singling out for praise several women writers. The authoress of *The Atelier du Lys* had his suffrages, among others.

Coventry Patmore ever proved the inspiring and inspired in such a *milieu*.

Who else could have thus paraphrased the second William's telegram to his spouse after Sedan? Was *Punch* ever relished as was the

number containing his famous parody of that pietistic monarch's message to his wife?

> "Thank the Lord, my dear Augusta,
> We have fought the French a buster,
> Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below,
> Praise Him from whom all blessings flow."

Like the fat boy in Pickwick, Coventry Patmore loved to make folk's flesh creep. Thus I remember when a guest at the beautiful old house, his last home, near Lymington, a small dinner-party was given in my honour, the company consisting of neighbouring gentry, county families, as the phrase goes; that is to say, squires and squiresses of the most rigid gentility—dullish company, one would deem, for a poet and a wit. As wine was being handed round, he blurted out:

"After all that is said and done, the best drink out and out is gin and water."

The horrification of his guests may be imagined. Had he turned mad on the spot they could not have shuddered more.

Despite his set resolve to live mentally in the Dark Ages—in other words, be a model convert worthy of his converter, rather I should say perverter—Coventry Patmore could not divest himself of his humour, *savoir vivre*, and chivalrous devotion to women and beauty.

And here I cannot resist an amusing incident. When meeting the poet at my house, my cousin,

Amelia B. Edwards, after eyeing him front and back with a glance at his shoulders, asked, with well-affected disillusion, "But where are his wings?" This reference to *The Angel in the House* pleased the poet mightily. A most animated group were my guests, and many happy and witty good things they said, but as hostess I was too distracted to store them up. For it is not every day that a most famous Egyptologist and a popular poet can be brought together, and I had gathered as many friends as my small drawing-rooms would hold, to share the privilege with me.

"My second wife brought me so many thousand pounds" (I do not venture on figures), Patmore would confide to his friends, and the unkind and uuspoken comment—at least of one listener—was that she was very dear at the money. But her wealth, of course, did not alter by one jot the simplicity of home life. With it was built and endowed the church of St. Mary Star-of-the-Sea, and doubtless increasing and cementing the small Catholic colony in the south coast. But, zealous to set a personal as well as a public example of religious enthusiasm, the poor lady soon after fell a victim to excessive devotion. On some special day in the Romish calendar, without breaking her fast she set out for St. Leonards, attending service in the little church there, a six-mile walk to and fro. Reaching home, she dropped down in a faint,

and her clothes had to be cut piecemeal from her lifeless body.

A very agreeable woman of the world but for pietistic ostentation was the second Mrs. Patmore, and a still more engaging figure was her successor, who gave her husband a son in his old age.

A curious pair they made as they sauntered along hand in hand, the little fellow a curiously old-looking child and the very image of his father, but an apt little chap, and he was very quick at putting two and two together.

"Why, papa, you are half as bad as Henry the Eighth," he broke out with one day, and other sallies are recorded of him.

Had the exquisite poem, "The Toys," any foundation in fact?

> "My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
> And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise."

Had he ever stirred his elderly father and boon companion to anger? Those who saw them and knew them together cannot believe it. Anyhow, "The Toys" is one of those simple effusions that few can read with dry eyes. And that line:

> "His Mother, who was patient, being dead,"

how it throbs with feeling and pathos!

"You must pay us another visit in the summer," was Coventry Patmore's charge as I quitted the hospitable house in the Solent.

But before the summer came he was borne to his last rest in the monastic garb symbolising not the sweet story-teller in verse, but the mystic whose most cherished work had been condemned by priestly counsel to an *auto-da-fé*!

If the gaiety of nations was not eclipsed by the death of Coventry Patmore, the town which he had distinguished by residence keeps his memory green. Not, certainly, after the good French fashion. With ourselves, little except military or naval history is inculcated by street nomenclature. The poet's seaside home has as yet no street named after him, but an admirable likeness hangs in the local museum.

A last word about my old friend, to whom in one sense I was anathema, a brand not to be snatched from the burning, in another a cherished friend and companion.

If he drew tears from my eyes, I was happy in being repaid by smiles from his lips. On a sixpenny edition of *Kitty*, I am proud to read on the first leaf this fine compliment of a poet whose *opus magnum* is no less alive:

"*Kitty* is a classic. I have read it over and over again. COVENTRY PATMORE, 1907."

II

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON

HALF A CENTURY'S FRIENDSHIP

What a subject have I here, more than full enough for a volume, and only to be inadequately dealt with in a monograph, a paper suited to *The Quarterly* or *Edinburgh Review.*

My intercourse, personal and on paper, with the last of the great Victorians and the doyen of letters throughout the Edwardian and Georgian periods until the present time, began more than fifty years ago. Proudly, indeed, do I enter upon a record so full of interest to the general reader and so fruitful to myself. At every stage I am brought face to face with momentous events and phases of thought, political, social, and religious problems long since solved, for better or for worse. And the more closely I survey the delightful task before me, the more incompetent do I feel in dealing with it. For I cannot aver of myself, as of my illustrious and, by five years, my senior contemporary, that I am still in the plenitude of bodily as of mental vigour. Time, on the whole, has dealt

very kindly with me. In the diamond jubilee of my literary career — 1857–1918 — I enjoy entire immunity from "that which doth accompany old age," defective hearing, vision, and perception. Nor can I complain of what is even worse to bear—namely, slights and oblivion. No more generous body exists than the novel-reading public. Newcomers, however brilliant their début, however numerous their editions, do not hustle old favourites off the stage. A novelist whose first work attains the rank of a classic, modest although it be and modest as may have been its author's emoluments, cannot arraign Fortune.

Friendships equally with achievements make red letters in our calendar. How I wish that I had put down in writing the exact date and precise circumstances of first encountering kindred and inspiring souls, those men and women who have straightway enriched life and opened new fields of thought and endeavour. The aftermath is remembered, the spot on which fell the handful of seed is forgotten. Fortunately, Mr. Frederic Harrison's memory is better than my own. On referring the subject to him, he writes:

My very dear Matilda,—I am on holiday—at last—having read and passed for press within the last five to six weeks my book of 460 pp. and four *Review* articles, and written piles of MS. on various matters. So I take a quarto page, a new

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pen, and my most amiable spirit to reply to your very grateful letters. My memory holds out still, and I have a rough diary of mere incidents and movements posted up since the year 1829, the year in fact of my parents' marriage. (*N.B.*—From 1829 until 1847 these entries were from my father's books of *accounts*. He entered every 6d. of expenses from setting up house, and I have those books now. My wife, in *The Cornhill Magazine*, wrote a most interesting paper on the habits of an early Victorian household out of these diaries, and I used them in my own *Autobiographical Memoirs*, vol. i. ch. i.) So your inquiry as to our first meeting. It was in July 1890. We were then passing the summer in our cottage—Blackdown Cottage, Haslemere, in Sussex, not in Surrey, an old cottage and farm on the Blackdown, which is 1030 feet high (not Hindhead, which is eight miles off in Surrey). Our pretty old place stood 800 feet above sea, and had magnificent views over the Weald of Sussex, four miles from Haslemere Station, and one mile from Aldworth, Tennyson's summer house. Why you wrote to me, and why you so kindly promised to visit us, you know better than I. Anyhow, we were proud to have you as a guest. We sent our man and carriage to fetch you from Haslemere. Our coachman, Williams, after twenty-four years' service with us, is now driving a great motor omnibus in London.

Yes, it was twenty-eight years ago when I had the happiness to hand out a bright and smiling

lady who seemed to be on the right side of fifty. It was love—*i.e.* lifelong friendship—at first sight, and we have been lovers, in the sense of close and intimate friends in thought, ever since. We spent a happy day rambling about that timbered hill with our daughter, not quite four, and with Bernard, not quite nineteen, from his first year and the Studio in Paris. How well I remember that visit! Now for replies.

As I said, my articles were in first numbers of the three Reviews, *Fortnightly*, *Nineteenth Century*, the third is *The Positivist Review*. It (the *P.R.*) contains 32 pp. every month, words of wisdom—from others as well as mine. In 1917, the *Review* contained each month my "Thoughts on Government," being a reissue of Part I. of my *Order and Progress*, 1875. This present year, 1918, it contained my (new) "Moral and Religious Socialism," which began in May and continued up to August. These two years contained a profoundly full summary of the entire political and economic synthesis according to the Gospel of Augustus Comte. They were as lucid as they were philosophic, not from my own ability but from the truths of the Master. I am only the *phonograph*. But all this — purely gratuitous — indeed, was published at our own cost—was utterly unheeded, unknown, and buried. Not even friends would spend their pennies in getting it. Probably only two or three score people read it, and only two or three of these quite understood and accepted it. All pure waste in our lifetime. Yet by

2018 A.D., or say A.H. 1, these little pieces will be held to be as well worth study as, say, Burke on the Revolution or his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents." People will read any chatter, short stories at 6s., and will buy dozens of picture papers at 1s. each, but will not give 3d.[1] for real wisdom. My life is spent in pouring out precious wine into glasses without bottoms, so that all runs into the sewer.[2] . . . My first visit to the East was from October 1 to November 1890—to Constantinople, Athens, and Rome. Lectured on Homer at Newton Hall on November 2, the day after my return from sight of Troas; lecture almost extempore, now in my *Among my Books*, 1912, ch. viii. On November 15 I lectured on Athens at Toynbee Hall. This is now in my *Meaning of History*, 1894, ch. x., and it is one of the most suggestive things I ever wrote. (*N.B.*—John Morley was reading it in the train coming from London to Bath the other day, and highly praised it as real history.) So that not everything I write passes like "bubbles in the air." *Theophano* was in twelve numbers of *The Fortnightly*, and was written at intervals over a whole year from month to month. But the tragedy of *Nicephorus* was written as a whole, and has a systematic plot and catastrophe, in form modelled on Alfieri and Goethe rather than Shakespeare, and without any attempt at poetic phraseology. I intended Tree to play

[1] Price of *The Positivist Review*.

[2] But what is contemporary fame compared to the verdict of posterity?—M. B.-E.

it, but he found it too big and costly, and, as Henry Arthur Jones told me, Tree saw that the woman's part would overpower him. Mrs. Pat [presumably Patrick Campbell] has read it. Well, here it is.—Yours always devotedly,

FREDERIC HARRISON.

The play itself I give an account of farther on, and I here give a few extracts from these letters, not one without typical literary and, needless to say, personal interest, diversely written in French, English, and Latin.

BATH, *Juin* 12, 1913.
(Gerbert,[1] 125).

Le volume est arrivé. Admirable, mieux que jamais.

Comparable à George Sand.

I am not sure whether this high compliment was paid to my *The Dream Charlotte* or *The Romance of a French Parsonage*, both published some years before.

BATH, *July* 3, 1913.

I have returned my little Introduction [to *The Lord of the Harvest*] marked for press without alterations in word or in letter. I never correct

[1] Positivists, like Romanists but more Catholic, date their letters on saints' days. Gerbert, Pope Sylvester II., a learned physicist and mathematician, was said to be in league with the Devil, 971, 1003: The Positive saints are chosen from all religions, as befits the religion of Humanity.

a proof except to note printers' blunders. Reading it in print, I like it as well as anything I ever wrote, and that because I enjoyed it. You inspired me, and I trust I caught some flavour of your idyllic tone, and that I kept the "values true," as painters say.

Everyone has his little vanities, and my vanity is fine calligraphy,—see what a lucid and artistic hand is this,—and my whim is never to alter a word in a manuscript or even in a letter. I follow Pontius Pilate, a fellow of good sense, who has never been appreciated. *Quod scripsi, scripsi,* said he, and so say I.

I enclose you my MS. to show you how I write for the press—*tout d'un trait.* I am sure that fifty years hence the MS. of your *Lord of the Harvest* will be secured for some library, and I wish that but one page of my little Foreword may be preserved, tacked to your copy.—Your aged friend and more than ever true admirer,

F. H.

March 8, 1914
(Thucydides, 126).

I rejoice to hear of your literary success. We both urge you to get your *Suffolk Courtship* put into "Everyman."[1] . . . I find that I can read no *new* books—except yours. I spent my afternoons [of a holiday sojourn with his wife near Bath] over

[1] The admirable Dent series of reprints. But better fortune still befell that simple story of Suffolk farming days and mid-Victorian days. It now figures in the Oxford "World's Classics."

Sophocles, Æschylus, and now Xenophon on Socrates. [Oh, Mr. Harrison, Positive and anti-female Suffrage as you are, you might here have alluded to the accomplished woman scholar Elizabeth, whose translation of that famous book has long been a classic!] And I have just finished *Tristram Shandy*—my copy is first edition, 4 vols., 12 mo, 1765—and *Don Quixote* in a translation. I find the Spanish difficult, but I can read *The Positive Review* of Mexico, which translates our Calendar month by month. And I have Furtwängler's *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture*—grand Greek sculpture is my only hobby.

I entirely agree with you as to Bulwer [I believe *re* my admiration of his *Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi*]. If you saw Bath forty years ago, you may be assured that it is almost the only city in England which has not been changed. It has not grown and has no new buildings. There is only one, the new hotel (a view of which I enclose). (Shakespeare, "How many evils have enclosed me round!") The charm of Bath is its magnificent country round, its parks, gardens, and endless walks, etc., its mild climate, daily music, and agreeable society. We know all whom we care to know, especially clerics, bishops, archdeacons, rectors, and the best houses within a motor drive. I belong to the Philosophical Institute and to the Literary Club, and my wife works her Anti-Suffrage Committees.—With her love and mine, ever your

FREDERIC HARRISON.

With regard to this letter I wrote suggesting that the Archdeacon and his new friend should change pulpits on Sundays, so refreshing and such a tonic to both congregations!

BATH, *April* 6, 1914.

Many thanks for your letter and the kind words of Professor Hales, whom I well remember years ago as one of the F. D. Maurice men. I am sure that your *Lord* [*of the Harvest*] will have a long reign.

By way of rousing intellectual elements dormant in Bath, I resolved to read my *Nicephorus* in the old historic theatre here, before our friends and a lot of Bath people. It has been adapted and translated into German for an opera, and is now being translated as a play in full. And, in order to secure copyright "acting rights," it has to be produced in a public theatre. So I took the title-rôle myself, and got the amateur dramatic society to read it in parts on the stage before an invited house. They all said they heard—especially Nicephorus; and they seemed interested. One lady who is deaf, and cannot hear a sermon in church, heard "every word" in the theatre. [Quite naturally, for she was not sent to sleep by curate's twaddle-dum-dee!] . . . In any case, it was an event this *première* of *tout Bath.*

I took this up partly to relieve my feelings about the awful public crisis. We are going straight to the most horrible catastrophe in English history. Ere this year is over, Britain will be in the throes of dissolution. It is no use trying to make any

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more compromises. I don't know which side is the most culpable. But civil war is inevitable, and *all* without any real principle to fight for—and certainly nothing but generations of evil to follow on it.

I am obliged to you for telling me about our Professor [the late Mr. Beesly]. I have [had] no correspondence with him for some time. We are likely to differ so deeply that I fear to write and could not bear to open a discussion. I can hear his snort of contempt if he ever heard of my playing in a theatre. I am a Gallio, I know, but now a very sad one.

Oddly enough, I should say, were not oddities so-called of daily, hourly occurrence, an early letter of Frederic Harrison has just come to hand. I had taken up that striking Byzantine play, *Nicephorus*, 1906, to re-read, when out slipped a letter which ran as follows—we had not yet called ourselves by our baptismal names, nor had I as yet received one of his epistles in Ciceronian Latin. These endearing privileges were to come.

10 Royal Crescent, Bath,
April 14, 1914 (Archimedes, 126).

Dear Miss Betham-Edwards,—Many thanks for your letter and views and all. If you really wish to read my tragedy, let me present you with an author's copy. I prefer it as a work of art to the romance of *Theophano* [by himself. Macmillan]. That was not written as a whole with a general

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plan at all. It was taken up to give miscellaneous illustrations of the Byzantine world of the tenth century, which I had been studying for years. It came out in the twelve numbers of the *Fortnightly*. . . . I am busy enough. I am continuing my *Last Thoughts*, and have just finished my Commentary on the Common Prayer [Book?] and Catholic Missal. My notes on our Calendar go on in the *Pos. Rev.*, and next week I am writing a review of Bridges' *Bacon*. I have promised to read a paper on R. Bacon at our Bath Literary Club, and I shall give a course of history lectures for the Bristol University branch at Bath. So I have enough to do—after sweets, the sour!

Your words about Ireland show me how unfit the ablest and best women are for politics. They judge by their hearts, not their heads, and mistake vague ideals for observed facts. [I fancy this refers to the Casement incident.] Bloody war in Ireland, and possibly in England, will not transfer cottagers to Abergavenny Castle. It will only keep Liberal policy out in the cold for a generation. —Yours always devotedly,

FREDERIC HARRISON.

Such a compliment I cannot omit, but blushingly set down. Who so modest as the really great? To think of F. H. thanking M. B.-E. for a word of praise!

April 25, 1914.

"It is indeed a memorable compliment to me that you should take the trouble to read my

play, and with such minute attention and such accurate memory. Your note about Princess Theodora not being in the Dramatis Personæ had escaped me. I think she was thrown in at the last moment to heighten the contrast between the callousness of the wife and the grief of the sisters of Romanus, and perhaps also to enable Tree to put on the stage another pretty girl (and Byzantine court robes. . . . Yes, there are too many Johns). [In the dialogue.]

BEAU RIVAGE PALACE,
OUCHY, LAUSANNE,
July 2, 1914.

Your letter reaches me here, but not the book. We both left Bath on Monday, 22nd ult., with Olive for the first tour we have taken together for twelve years. My wife's health has been so much improved at Bath that we felt moved to go to Paris, partly to see Bernard's three pictures [their eldest son] well placed in the Salon, to make acquaintance with his many friends in Paris—artists, connoisseurs, and patrons of his; secondly, to our Positivist Society, where I was asked to give them my personal reminiscences of Auguste Comte, being now the only survivor of those who saw him and talked to him in 1855.

Our journey (broken at Dover) did my wife no harm, and though she did not attempt to walk in Paris, she was able to go to the Salon, the Studio, the Luxembourg, and the meeting in the new rooms of our Society. The reunion was most interesting —about one hundred members, old and new. The

President said fine things of her and me, and I spoke for thirty minutes, reading parts of my presidential address to the Sociological Institute—the English form of which will be in the *Positive Review* for August. . . . The principal etcher in Paris has etched in colour two of Bernard's Italian landscapes, which G. Petit, the boss of painters (the G. Petit Gallery is an annual exhibition), has purchased. So our visit was a business affair for B. of much value. And our visit to the new rooms of the Society was greatly appreciated by them and enjoyed by us. Bernard and I took Olive about to the various galleries, shows, to the Bois de Boulogne, Bagatelle; and B. took her to the theatre. We did not go out but lived *en pension.* After a week in Paris, which by Sunday got very hot, we came on the 30th to this place. Our Bath doctor thought it would be of use to my wife. . . . Ouchy is my old favourite haunt, and I was really athirst to see the snow mountains once more—of course, we shall not go touring about here. At present the Lake is not too hot, but 72° F. in my rooms—but we may go up to some place on the hills, the doctor insists not above 4000 feet. At that, he thinks Switzerland will do her good. She is wonderfully well in general health, and everyone says she looks twenty years under her age. Only she has to be very careful not to stand or walk.

As for me, I am quite well, I think. I can walk for two or three hours uphill, and sleep well; but I hardly eat anything but eggs, and fricassees, and vegetable food. I have brought some classics and

some poets, and have been since 6 a.m. in our balcony reading Horace and Shelley at intervals, and looking across the Lake at the Dent-du-Midi and Savoy Alps, and dreaming of glacier excursions, and of Byron and Gibbon and all the memories of this centre of European traditions. The regicide Ludlow, who lived and died at Vevey, inscribed on his door:

Forti omne solum patria.

I inscribe:

Sapienti—solum Helveticum—patria.

Our travelling abroad together for once all these years—our tour to Switzerland, for our last look at the Delectable Mountains—has been a bold experiment, but it has succeeded, as yet. Outside, in France, in Europe, in the Balkans, in Ireland, I see nothing but chaos and battle. I cannot write a word on it.—Yours always devotedly,

F. Harrison.

November 28, 1914.

I have been much pleased with your little volume. That bit about the Marseillaise is really most interesting and authentic, after Lamartine's gush. And the account of Doré interests me much. I had a Doré phase once myself. Do you know his Rabelais? Did I not once before ask you this question? Do see Austin's new little book, *The Kaiser's War*, with an Introduction of mine. The Kaisertum is cracking up. But I fear our Radical Pacifists will try to stop bringing the war to its

proper end. There will be a desperate effort to call *uti possidetis*, "as you are," a drawn battle about Easter. Germany is still in Russia, France, Belgium. Her borders are untouched. — Yours always, F. H.

March 21, 1917.

My very dear Friend,—I am indeed grateful to you for giving me news of yourself, and I wish you joy most heartily on the success of your new book [*Twentieth Century France.* Chapman & Hall]. It is a fine compliment from the great Frenchman.[1] I must see it as soon as I am free of work. I am now just finishing my memoirs of all I have lost in Her [his beloved wife], and have made a collection of her essays to make a volume, I trust, after the war. In making a record of all her activities, I am amazed at the great mass of various tasks she took and completed in spite of her poor health and many domestic cares. No one has any idea of what she did. Our outreaching towards Humanity owed more to her than to any of us men. Why am I left, the useless one?—and she who could have done so much more is gone. Your beautiful "In Memoriam" [*Westminster Gazette*] I purpose to put as the motto of the volume, and her hymn, No. 58,[2] as the L'envoi. . . .

I am re-issuing my "Thoughts on Government," 1874, in the current *Positive Review.* I foresaw forty years ago the House of Commons

[1] The award of the title "Officier de l'Instruction Publique de France."

[2] See at end.

pretending to *govern*. And the French Chamber is as bad as ours . . .

(*Re* Scott's novels.) I have always thought *The Black Dwarf* one of the very worst. When I was at Ruskin's in 1899 he gave me to read in Scott's own MS. that he bought, a folio or quarto written about 2500 words every morning. That beats *you*.

I read no new book at all—I am now reading only tragedy: Sophocles' *Antigone*, the greatest of all tragedies; Corneille's *Horace*, Racine's *Athalie*, etc. etc. . . . I have been occupied every afternoon this month by Lord Rosebery, who comes to take me out in his car, or to take a walk with him in the parks and country. He is a brilliant talker.—Affectionately yours always, F. H.

On November 6 of 1917 comes the following in Ciceronian Latin:

Fredericus Matildae suae S.D.

Gratissimo sane animo recepi litteras tuas amabiles, anno aetatis meae sexto et octogesimo jam peracto. Socii enim sumus et aequales in senectute, in litteris, in cogitationibus tam de rebus publicis quam de rebus divinis. Nihil prorsus habemus, O sodalium meorum superstes unica, quod senectutem accusemus. Anni quippe octogessimi corporibus nostris nihil intolerabile afferunt, dum mentibus nostris—gratias agamus Sanctae Humanitati—pauca certe detrahunt. Hoc si incredibile videatur junioribus, qui nugis trivialibus vacare

solent, monendum est nos—praesertim te amica mea venerabilis—e juventute prima animum totum dedisse in litteras vere humaniores, tam Graecas quam Latinas, tam in versu quam in sermone pedestri scriptas. Quid dicam—non solum in litteras Anglicas sed in quidquid Franci et externae gentes optimum et celeberrimum tradiderunt.

Mirabile est quomodo studia nostra in idem consentire videantur. Libros illos quos hodie te legere mihi scribis, ego autem praecipue in manu habere soleo. Nihil pusillum, nihil vulgare, nihil obscenum aut obsoletum in bibliothecam meam intrat. Die noctuque verso praeclaras illas veterum tragedias et comedias—praesertim Aeschyli Septem. Quippe *τριλογίαν Ἀτρειδῶν* censeo ingenii humani maximum partum fuisse, Swinburnius noster recte aestimavit. Si quis velit Sophoclem—Graecorum omnium dulcissimum—senem illum qui ad nonagesimum annum novas tragedias fecit—Aeschylo proxime accessisse, certe hoc erat in *Ἀντιγόνης* suae *τραγικωτάτῃ* illa oratione Virginis moriturae :

> *ὦ Τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς*
> *οἴκησις ἀείφρουρος, οἷ πορεύομαι*
> *πρὸς τοὺς ἐμαυτῆς*

Homeri, Aeschyli, Sophoclis et Aristophanis opera omnia recenter perlegi—Euripides non aeque mihi arridet, forsitan e memoria lugubre scholarium dierum. Inter Latinos, Vergilius, Horatius, Catullus, Juvenalis, Plinius maxime me delectant. Lucretium, Tacitum, Persium studere laboriose potius quam legere vacue fas est.

Hic legendi meus est mos. Mane, adhuc in lecto requiescens, cantica illa recito quae conjux mea in aeternum deploranda tanto studio et ingenio confecit. Haec sunt preces matutinae. Tum, quum epistolas receptas, actorum diurnas scripturas ephemeridas illas perfecerim, converto me ad Ajacem Sophocleum cum commentariis optimis Ricardi Jebb, aut "Poetae" nostri W.S. aliquid, vel Idyllium quod Tennysonius noster e carminibus vetustis Med: Aevi elaboravit. Tandem in cubiculum scandens Scotti nostri incomparabilis historiam nonnullam mecum porto.

Morem legendi tuum, precor, mihi quoque describere velis.

Scribebam Bathonia die Vico. Nov. A.D. 1917.

If you want details and dates, turn to my *Autobiographic Memoirs* (Macmillan, 8vo, 2 vols., 1911). It is the most veracious, shameless, naked, unveiling, disembowelling exposure of a man's inside ever seen in literature.[1] In its 800 pages it tells almost everything I could remember and find recorded in letters, diaries, or books, even common trifles from October 18, 1831, down to October 18, 1911, when it was first published, *ætat.* 80. But even if you read that through with all the huge bibliography, pp. 335–345, you would not know half what I have done, seen, and written. Without that remarkable classic (as in the twenty-first century it will be) you would not know one per cent of my doings and writings.

[1] No. What else is the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini and of Rousseau?

People here in Bath have no idea of what I am or have done or written. It is not a double life I lead, a Hyde and Jekyll[1] affair—it is a centuple life I lead. I have been, seen, done, written fifty things they never heard of [dear harmless old ladies and gentlemen, how should they?]. There is almost nothing that I have not tried[2]—even stag-hunt, fox-hunt, hare-hunt. I have ridden a race-horse on a race-course, and have been at all the great races, at times driven in my dog-cart, and in a four-horse drag [carriage or coach, Thackeray], etc. etc. I have often been on the top of every great mountain in Scotland, Wales, Cumberland, Alps, Pyrenees, Apennines, Austria, and Greece. I have yachted in the Channel and in the Mediterranean. I have been in every capital and great city in Europe barring Madrid and Seville, and also in the U.S.A. I have worked in every museum in Europe barring Madrid, and have talked with nearly every famous politician and writer in Britain, France, Italy, U.S.A., Holland, Greece, Turkey, Scandinavia. I have been down coal-mines, I am an enrolled member of two great Trades Unions. I have been the guest and the host of many Labour leaders, including a visit to a prisoner in the Conciergerie [no explanation], and I witnessed the decapitation of an Italian officer in a riot. I was present at the Italian vote in the Duchies for Victor Emmanuel and at the

[1] The famous story by R. L. Stevenson.

[2] Except perhaps, like Lord Brassey, learning a new language, in his case that jaw-breaking German at the age of seventy. What an exploit! His father's, the great railway contractor, nothing to it.

election of Tricoupis in Athens. I have shaken hands with Gambetta, Mazzini, Victor Hugo, Garibaldi, and sat in the gallery of the House of Commons beside the Comte de Paris. I have heard every great actor since Macready and every actress since Rachel and Grisi. I have tried everything—have been an alderman, a J.P., an LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D., a horseman from boyhood, a swimmer, a mountaineer, a waltzer, a card-player, a diner-out, member of a dozen clubs, a man about town, a Park revolutionary orator. Only two things I have always barred: (1) Tobacco in any form and drink. (2) Sport, meaning killing of animals. But I have been on the Alps with hunters and have walked over most moors in Scotland and Britain—indeed, have owned game preserves. . . . Well, I can't go on. I only want to assure you that you will never get to the end of me. . . .

I am really going to stop writing for the public now. I am going to rest and read old books. I have always had of late at my bedside Plato, and mystical stuff it is, and Malory's *Mort d'Arthur*, far finer than Tennyson's "fashion-plate" *Idylls*. Now I am going to read through *Plutarch's Lives*.

Glorious news! Early victory.—Your devoted friend, FREDERIC.

From a later note about the same time:

I rejoice to hear that you are so cheerful and so busy. We have just got home to Bath, having had three weeks at Lyme Regis, far the most interesting

and pleasant of all Channel ports, a real old harbour of Plantagenets and Tudors—sent out ships to the Armada, keeps her old stone breakwater. Read *Persuasion.* I am wonderfully well. . . .

Then follows a sentence on the quite imaginary indifference of the reading world to his own works. He styles himself effete, *passé*, *oublie*, *mort*, as many others of his mental height in moments of depression have done before.

"Will anyone read my novels when I am gone, doctor?" asked the great Dumas of his doctor when on his dying bed. "We always give one to patients about to undergo an operation," was the retort. "Straightway their own case is clean forgotten, and the ordeal is cheerfully met."

III

GEORGE ELIOT AND MADAME BODICHON

I

It was in the spring of 1867 that I first met the great woman novelist now known throughout the entire reading world. Our acquaintance began in this way. I had spent the winter in Algiers under the roof of that remarkable pair, Dr. Eugène and Madame Barbara Leigh-Smith Bodichon. The doctor had won his titles of fame by valuable works on the colony, also by equally valuable medical services during visitations of malaria, and last, but not least, when Deputy of the Chamber, by his motion to abolish slavery throughout the French African colony, a measure which was straightway carried into effect. Daughter of a landed proprietor, Benjamin Smith, M.P. for Norwich, his English wife before her marriage in 1857 had done much for education and the improvement of the legal status of her sex. A charming water-colour artist, she never attained the position her gifts merited, too many

objects occupying her ever-active mind. With her husband she did much to improve hygienic conditions of the Algerian plain by vast plantations of the health-giving American *Eucalyptus globulus*. A rich woman, her wealth was always spent upon great objects, and as the foundress of the first University for women (Girton College) in the United Kingdom, she has won for herself an imperishable niche in history. Women are very disloyal to each other, and her biography yet remains to be written. No Girtonian has troubled herself about her benefactress.

This noble woman was my intimate friend, and at the date I mention we had returned together from a tour in Spain and a winter in Algiers, myself, for the nonce, being again her guest at 5 Blandford Square.

On the morning after our arrival she said:

"Now, Milly" (that was what the French call the *petit nom* always used by my family and familiars), "put on your bonnet and go with me to the Priory. I will ask Marian if I may present you."

My heart leaped at the proposal, for I knew that Marian was the baptismal Mary Ann thus euphemised by George Eliot's closest friend.

The Priory, that celebrated "gathering-place of souls," to quote our equally great Victorian poetess, was one of the many St. John's Wood villas almost to be called country retreats. The comfortably pro-

portioned two-storied residence, approached by a drive, stood sufficiently apart from the road as to ensure its inmates comparative quiet. Here Mr. and Mrs. Lewes lived historic years; and although uncemented by legal ties, never was union more complete or more fruitful in blessing to both: wit and perennially youthful spirits on his part lightened the weight of thought on hers, and kept alive the all-saving grace of humour.

Even her best friend could not introduce anyone without permission. So I waited inside the gate till my hostess beckoned me, and there I was in the presence of a tall, prematurely old lady wearing black, with a majestic but appealing and wholly unforgettable face. A subdued yet penetrating light—I am tempted to say luminosity—shone from large dark eyes that looked all the darker on account of the white, marble-like complexion. She might have sat for a Santa Teresa.

Unaffectedly cordial was my reception, but hardly had I recovered from one thrill when I was *bouleversée*, as the French say, by the glamour of another. The conversation naturally turned upon Spain, when suddenly Mr. Lewes accosted the great woman with boyishly enthusiastic camerade-ship.

"Now, Polly, what say you to *this*?"

Bishop Proudie in Trollope's immortal scene could not have been more thunder-struck at hearing

"the wife of his bosom called a woman" than I was then.

What the "this" referred to I forget, but very possibly to an idea afterwards carried out. In the following year Mr. and Mrs. Lewes followed our footsteps south, their journey resulting in *The Spanish Gypsy*, a poem, despite the invention of its heroine's exquisite name and many fine lines, now all but forgotten. As an hour later we passed out of the gate, my friend began:

"Shall I tell you Marian's compliment to yourself? 'I congratulate you, dear Barbara,' she said, 'on possessing a friend who is without fringes.'"

It is the only time that I have ever heard the word "fringes" used for "fads,"[1] and the only time I ever received a commendatory one from the same lips. How much more gratified should I have been had she expressed her pleasure at meeting the authoress of such and such a novel! But I can understand her reticence. What, indeed, would life have been worth had she once begun to receive the confidences and aspirations of youthful tyros? Her lot would have been worse than Miss Mitford's.

My hostess's invitation to dinner for the next day was accepted, and circumstances grave and gay

[1] But George Eliot knew better. Did not Bishop Taylor write of "the fringes of repentance"?

made the occasion equally ineffaceable. Quite sure of the great visitors' punctuality, we awaited them in the drawing-room. True enough, the street bell rang on the stroke of seven. What was Madame Bodichon's dismay when her incomparable parlour-maid threw wide the door with the announcement:

"Captain and Mrs. Harrison."

Then came a ripple of laughter—George Henry Lewes' hearty and unfeigned, George Eliot's slightly remonstrant. The name was a joke. It was beyond her competence to play the child. In excellent spirits the simple but well-cooked dinner was partaken of, Madame Bodichon involuntarily ever acting upon a precept of Mahomet in the Koran—"Bestow not upon the rich." The more opulent her guests, the plainer was their fare.

But conviviality had no meaning for these two. The dinner-table topic resolved itself into this problem: How and by what means would the world—that is to say, the terrestrial globe we inhabit—come to an end? By combustion, submergence, gradual decay, and so on. I seem to hear George Eliot's penetrating, pathetic voice:

"Yet, dear Barbara, might not this come about——" Or, "Suppose that——"

For myself, I was silent, overawed as some alumnus when Pericles and Aspasia held their court.

II

Thenceforward I was invited to the famous Sunday afternoons at the Priory, and I well remember George Eliot's kindly attempt to set me at ease.

The entry into such a circle was no trifling ordeal to a young country-bred, although already much-travelled, girl, and already having several novels to her credit, the first of these now celebrating its diamond jubilee.[1]

There in the centre of the room, as if enthroned, sat the Diva; at her feet in a semicircle gathered philosophers, scientists, men of letters, poets, artists —in fine, the leading spirits of the great Victorian age. Frederic Harrison, almost the only one left us of so memorable a group; Professor Beesly, Herbert Spencer, Browning, William Morris, that charming poet and self-styled "singer of an empty day"; Sir Frederick Leighton, Director of the National Gallery; Philip Gilbert Hamerton, author of *French and English* and cementer of Anglo-French friendship at a time when we seemed perilously, if not hopelessly, Germanised, to our certain moral, intellectual, and national abasement —these were only a few of the noteworthy figures caught sight of as, timidly enough, I advanced to the hostess.

[1] *The White House by the Sea*, 1857; in 1918 existing in Collins' Clear Print Series issued at 6d.

Despite her grand aloofness from conventionalities and an utter incapacity to overdo courtesy,—I will not use the word to flatter,—George Eliot, never, that I ever heard of, hurt people's feelings or pooh-poohed valueless admiration. She could not have rebuked a naïve worshipper with a Johnsonian, "Before you choke me with your praises, Madam, remember what your praises are worth." Not that I should have ventured upon so much as an allusion to the masterpieces so dear and familiar, *Adam Bede* and the rest. And seeing that she had nothing to fear from me on that score, as soon as a break in the discussion permitted, she withdrew from the group and chatted with me in the easiest, least bookish fashion possible.

Madame Bodichon had naturally told her of my farming days, and that, having now lost my father and mother, I was entering upon a literary life in London. Be this as it may, she immediately began to talk of her own early life and of her father. Very tender was her voice as she touched on the sacred theme, and so full of tenderness were her large dark eyes that I quite understood Sir Frederick Leighton's enthusiasm. For, our brief chat over, I fell back, and taking the first vacant chair, it happened to be next his. We were old acquaintances, had walked and talked in Kensington Gardens, had set out in a bus for a Saturday Pop together,—as the celebrated week-end concerts at St. James's Hall were called,—

and a most pleasant friend and neighbour he became.

On this Sunday afternoon he seemed oblivious of everything around him, his eyes fixed on the priestess-like, rather Sybil-like figure opposite. After a mechanically uttered phrase or two he burst out—a lover's voice could hardly have been more impassioned:

"How beautiful she is!"

After all, was not the artist right? What is physical perfection compared to spiritual beauty, the inner radiance that transforms, etherialises features not flawless according to rule of thumb? Meanwhile Mr. Lewes was doing everything to promote the general pleasure—acting, indeed, a dual part, relieving the hostess of all responsibility. Who could help comparing the pair to Titania and Puck? —herself, queen-like, effortless, impassible; he, anticipating her behests, here, there, and everywhere, taking care that no guest should be neglected. Naturally, the German element was never absent from these assemblages. Was not the biographer of Goethe styled *der Goetische Lewes* by his country-people, and had not homage been paid to both in the so ironically called Fatherland? He now brought up a quiet, gentlemanly-looking man, saying in German:

"I have the pleasure of introducing to you Herr Liebreich, the discoverer of chloral."[1]

[1] Chloral was discovered by Liebig in 1831. It was first used as an anæsthetic and hypnotic by Liebreich in 1869.

I had already spent many months at Stuttgart, as many at Frankfort-on-the-Main, and had wintered in Vienna, so the question of language was not disquieting. But a *tête-à-tête* with a scientist did seem rather dreadful. My interlocutor, however, tried to talk down to me, and I tried to talk up to him, and soon the welcome clatter of cups and saucers relieved the tension. There was a move towards the lower end of the room, Mr. Lewes presiding at the teapot.

"To make tea, my friends," he said laughingly, "I hold is the whole duty of man."

All now was comparative frivolity, gaiety, and persiflage; mirth and music replaced Socratic discussion and talk worthy of being Boswellised.

"We have a singing bird here," said Mr. Lewes. "She must charm us before departure."

The fashionably dressed young lady in question, some Lady Clara Vere de Vere, did not deny the delicate imputation, and true enough, before the party broke up, those almost solemn precincts were ringing with just such a song as might divert the guests of any Belgravian drawing-room.

Belgravia, indeed, had forced an entrance into the Priory, and, as we might expect, that intrusion was followed by an exodus. More than one old friend and habitué, more than one distinguished guest dropped off. The "gathering-place of souls" gradually changed its character. Its doors had

been thrown too wide, and "fools rushed in where angels feared to tread."[1]

III

But I was soon to see George Eliot in intellectual and social undress, to enjoy her company for an entire week, perhaps the only person now living retaining such a memory.

Madame Bodichon had rented a High Church vicarage in the Isle of Wight for the winter of 1870–71, myself being her guest throughout the period, and before Christmas she invited her great friends to join us.

"Yes, dear Barbara," came a reply in the exquisitely neat handwriting of one who could do nothing flimsily—"Yes, dear Barbara, we will come and weep with you over the sorrows of France."

They duly arrived, and a memorable week it was to the youngest of the quartet, doubtless her fellow-guests little suspecting that there was "a chiel among ye takin' notes."

From the first Madame Bodichon monopolised Titania. Puck had to put up with me, and from the first he gave us all a taste of his quality. As we

[1] In his two bulky volumes Herbert Spencer gives many interesting notes on George Eliot. See his *Autobiography* (Williams & Norgate. London, 1904). Unfortunately, the great philosopher who had mastered the knowable had not mastered Pope's maxim: "The greatest art of all, the art to blot."

sat down to breakfast next morning, the sedate, middle-aged parlour-maid was greeted by "A merry Christmas to you, Ann, and a marrying New Year." Too well-trained to giggle, and perhaps not displeased with the suggestion, Ann blushed like a sixteen-year-old and just managed to stammer out her thanks.

With dinner-time came another display of irrepressible frolicsomeness. Soup being removed, Mr. Lewes rubbed his hands with a well-affected Epicurean air.

"You will, I know, dear Barbara," he said, "excuse the liberty taken by an old friend. I have ventured to add a little delicacy to your bill of fare."

Well tutored, Ann now removed the silver cover with a flourish, and as she did so the uninitiated three sprang back with a cry. Lo and behold! Instead of a rare dainty, an uncanny thing like a crayfish uncurled as if alive! It was the scourge with which the rector flagellated himself, and which the temporary occupant of his sanctum had laid hands upon for our diversion.

A week of glorious walks and talks followed. Fortunately, the weather was fine, and every day, most often between lunch and tea, we paired off for long strolls, in what Swift would have described as a "walkable" country. Sometimes we made little excursions, and of one I retain a pathetic re-

membrance. At a village station I met a pleasant novelist, to-day, I fear, quite forgotten—by name, Georgiana M. Craik. Now I had been cautioned by no means to disclose the name of Madame Bodichon's visitors to chance-met acquaintances. But my conscience did afterwards reproach me for not having whispered in this one's ear, as the others sauntered up and down, "That lady in black is no other than the author of *Adam Bede*."

Could persuasion, however, could anything have prevented the other from metaphorically falling on her knees before the Diva? I should very likely have brought about mortification and got myself into a terrible scrape. George Eliot was in her zenith, the gentle little author of *Riverston* and other tales had hardly popped her head above the horizon.

During our walks Madame Bodichon would carry George Eliot in one direction, Mr. Lewes and myself taking another. He generally talked the whole time of "Polly." It delighted him to discover in me a whole-hearted admirer of *Felix Holt*, a work generally less admired than their great brethren. How he laughed when I quoted that denunciation of his sex by Mrs. Transom's maid: "creatures who stand straddling and gossiping in the rain."

But the crowning hour of the day came when

dinner was over, lamps were shaded, and we gathered round the fire. No recreations were in request; whist, chess, backgammon, billiards, would here have been the extreme of boredom. High talk mingled with lighter topics have left golden memories.

And may I be excused for mentioning a proud remembrance? On two occasions the shy country girl was listened to by the great. Once all three heard me with profound interest, and once I gave them the merriest moment of that especial symposium.

It happened that a Socialist friend, Mr. Cowell-Stepney by name, had lately escorted me to a sitting of the International, presided over by Dr. Karl Marx, the founder of International Socialism, who more than any other man has influenced the Labour movement throughout the civilised world. Now this sort of experience was quite out of Mr. and Mrs. Lewes's way. Their world was the world of the intellectual élite, not of "the man in the street," the hewers of wood and drawers of water. So to the least little particular I could give, all paid the utmost attention.

I must not forget that during these evenings we sometimes enjoyed a musical treat. George Eliot would sit down to the piano and very correctly, perhaps somewhat too painstakingly, give us a sonata of Beethoven from notes. The charm of the

performance was that it was done amiably and evidently in order to give us pleasure.

"What shall it be, dear little boy?" she would ask, as she turned over the contents of the music-wagon, and the "dear little boy"—I love to hear these terms of endearment among the great—generally demanded Beethoven. One sonata she played to us was Op. 14, No. 2, containing the slow, plaintive Andante in A minor, ever one of my favourites.

For light holiday reading the wonderful pair had brought surely the strangest book in the world—namely, Wolf's *Prolegomena*, which, however, had one advantage. It did not touch upon the tragedy of the time. In this work the most gifted scholar and first critic of his age (1729–1824) unfolded with equal erudition and acuteness his bold theory that the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* are composed of numerous ballads by different minstrels, strung together in a kind of unity by subsequent editors.

As I have mentioned, our rectory adjoined the church, and on Christmas morning, and in arctic weather, Madame Bodichon carried her friend off to hear the fine musical service—Mass would be the proper appellation.

George Eliot listened with subdued rapture, the clear shrill voices of the choir, the swell of the organ evidently evoking a religious mood none

the less fervent because unallied with formulary and outward observance.

The midnight service had been proposed, but——

"No, dear; on no account would I keep George up for me so late," said the great visitor, unlike her hostess in one respect, indeed in many. Whilst Madame Bodichon could never have half enough of anything she loved, whether good company, æsthetic impression, or strawberries and cream—her abnormal energy craving more and yet more expansion—George Eliot's nature needed repose. She did not, in French phrase, *chercher des émotions.*

But why, oh! why did I neglect the seven days' wonderful opportunity? With the unwisdom and self-assurance of youth, I neglected notebook and tablets. It never occurred to me to set down the high talk of that Ventnor drawing-room. Instead of binding them into a sheaf, I let the golden ears fall to the ground.

Here are one or two, the topic being literary excellence and fame—perhaps I should rather say, recognition and the criterion of both.

"There is the money test," George Eliot said, and paused, as she often did before continuing a train of thought. [Would she have uttered that sentence nowadays, when novels reaching fabulous prices are clean forgotten before copies have become soiled in Mudie's?]

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Her next sentence even less commends itself to all lovers of literature:

"Then there is the test of sincerity."

A canon not unassailable either. For of course the only, the final, test of literature, whether grave or gay, is duration, the ineffaceable seal of Time. Was ever any book written with greater sincerity, for instance, than the *Proverbial Philosophy* of Martin F. Tupper?—a book that enriched the author and was for a time taken seriously. Who reads poor dear Martin Tupper's twaddle-dum-dee nowadays?

If George Eliot, naturally enough, held aloof from literary aspirants, Mr. Lewes never lost an occasion of helping them. When the great week came to an end he said to me:

"Now you will, I am sure, like your new novel to appear in the Tauchnitz edition. I will write to the Baron, and as you say you are going to Germany in the spring, I will ask him to call upon you. On arriving at Leipzig, you have only to send him your card."

The German visit was carried out, and to Mr. Lewes I owed not only the satisfaction and profit of having all my books thenceforward published in the famous Continental series, but the warm friendship and hospitalities of the first Baron and the second, his son.

IV

Yet a few words more about one of the greatest figures in our national Valhalla, and one whose fame, if she ever troubled herself about fame, has surpassed any author's wildest dreams. I am sorry that she died half a century before she had an enthusiastic following in Japan. I can fancy Mr. Lewes's exuberance over the triumph, his "Well, Polly, after *that* I shall never venture an opinion of your books, that is quite certain." Or, "Now, Polly, see if a Chinese translation of *Adam Bede* won't be the next pleasant surprise." It was really beautiful, this absolute comprehension of a larger intellect and character by a lesser and less stable.

A more agreeable walking companion could not be, but I sometimes wished that we had not invariably paired off. There were, however, excellent reasons for this arrangement. Although not admitted to the confidential *tête-à-tête* of our hostess and her visitor, I well knew what grave subjects would be discussed by them.

The foundress of Girton College and the indefatigable pioneer of legal reforms regarding women had one subject even nearer her heart than even the educational, material, and social elevation of her sex. Madame Bodichon entertained a passionate pity for her pariah sister, a horror of

conditions accepted, not to say in a civilised but also in a Christian country. Had she lived longer, she would have joyfully welcomed a growing repulsion in France and a spirit of revolt against the system which, in plain words and excused on behalf of the public health, legalises and supervises prostitution.

If righteous indignation characterised the doer, the woman of action, I should call sensitiveness the other's leading quality. I firmly believe that had George Eliot convicted herself of inflicting a grave injury on any living soul, remorse would have worn her out, killed her by inches. Her super-sensitiveness in little things was painful to witness. Here is an instance.

During the week I was obliged to call in a surgeon, and have a finger lanced on account of a painful gathering. Next morning, in shaking hands by the breakfast table, she pressed, or rather fancied she pressed, the injured part.

"Oh!" she said, with a look of positive anguish, "I have hurt the poor finger. I am always doing this sort of thing."

And it was with difficulty that I could reassure her.

An instance of such sensitiveness was told me by Mrs. Hamerton, who in her husband's lifetime had occasionally attended the Sunday afternoon receptions. On her reappearance after a year or

two's absence, George Eliot asked news of her family and friends.

"No gaps?" she said, with quite affectionate solicitude.

Again, when the widow of Arthur Hugh Clough, the poet of the Bothie of *Tober-na-Vuolich* and the subject of Matthew Arnold's fine elegy *Thyrsis*, called one Sunday with his little son, the hostess's first question was a pathetic, "What is his name?" She always liked to call children by their names, she added.

There is a suavity in sovereign natures. These alone can discern the infinitely fine shades dividing simplicity from annoyance, real from affected admiration. As a subtle writer of the last century has admirably written: "It is a rare perfection of the intellectual and moral faculties which allows all objects, great and small, to be distinctly perceived, and perceived in their relative magnitudes." George Eliot was "a soul of the high finish" of which Isaac Taylor wrote. Here is an instance.

After that Christmas week I returned to 5 Blandford Square, and had a very severe bronchial attack. So serious was my condition that on partial recovery I was summarily ordered a Mediterranean cruise, and with a friend sailed from Portsmouth to Gibraltar, thence to Malta and Alexandria, thence to Athens, and from Athens to Venice.

On my return in March I ran up from Hastings,

my abode from that period to this, to London. On the way to Madame Bodichon's I called at the Priory, leaving with my card a bunch of violets, one of the cream cheeses formerly a Hastings speciality, also some pats of butter, golden of the golden, creamiest of the cream. The unsophisticated, perhaps to ordinary folks impertinent, attention was charmingly acknowledged on the following Sunday afternoon. Taking both my hands when I entered with my hostess, George Eliot said, with congratulations on my recovered health and a smile :

"So, having recovered yourself, you are bent upon fattening your friends?"

Little traits of quite other kind will, I am sure, be welcome.

The two great friends would sometimes stroll along the streets together and look at the shops like other womenkind.

One morning as they sauntered down Bond Street, pausing before each glittering display, George Eliot said : "How happy are we both, dear Barbara, that we want nothing we see here!"

One point struck me. The Priory knew no pets. So intellectually and humanly full were the lives of both master and mistress that there was no room for cat, dog, bird, or goldfish. Children, as has been mentioned, were occasionally admitted into the learned precincts, but no live playthings. Did ever

a dog wag its tail and therein ask a caress from hosts or guests? I know not.

Nor except at the door was anything seen or heard of Grace and Amelia, the two faithful middle-aged maids, who, as far as I ever learned, knew nothing of their great lady's writings except that they had made her famous. To the perpetual disappointment of the worthy couple, Queen Victoria never drew up to the door, no royal visit filled their cup to overflowing. Grace and Amelia little dreamed that their own names would live in the book of fame! Such is the irony of life.

V

To criticise the world's classics is to find fault with the Pyramids for not being round, with Shakespeare for not having been a novel-writer, with Victor Hugo for not having laid the scene of *Notre-Dame* between 1789–94, and made Madame Roland his hero instead of Esmeralda, and so on and so on. How futile, indeed, is all criticism of the Immortals; how puerile are quibbling and cavilling at leading spirits, "whose names are written on the book of Time."

One or two noteworthy estimates only of George Eliot, her life-work and character, I give here. A great Victorian, one of the greatest, who knew her well, and who is happily yet among us, has said,

"George Eliot was greater than her works." But must not this be affirmed of creators in any field? Is not the master ever greater than his masterpiece? Do we adore a *chef-d'œuvre* in the same frame of mind as we adore a beautiful landscape or sunset? The individual gift, the aspiration and achievement, cannot be ignored by the least reflective.

Again, it is often urged that fame, adulation, and intercourse with the most brilliant wits, geniuses, and most renowned thinkers of her time were in her case a loss rather than a gain. The idyllic charm, the raciness and spontaneity of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, and perhaps of *The Mill on the Floss*, gradually gave way to a more laboured style and a more introspective psychology. *Romola*—a midway production—is an historical novel worthy of comparison with Bulwer Lytton's ever-delightful *Last Days of Pompeii*, but *Daniel Deronda*, 1876, if not a dead-weight on her reputation, as was *Count Robert of Paris* on the great Sir Walter's, showed, as a judicial critic wrote,[1] "a marked falling-off in power, though many of the scenes are sufficiently rich in pathos, humour, and insight."

In confirmation of my remark, another friend to whom, as to Barbara Bodichon, she was "Marian" always, herself a wife and mother, and by no means a commonplace writer—Madame Parkes-Belloc, wrote:

"The truth is, dear Milly, after her early years,

[1] *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, 1889, by Richard Holt Hutton.

and especially after her installation as mistress of the Priory, she saw very little of life—that is, of family life."

How could it have been otherwise? What room was there in that Parnassian retreat for noisy bantlings? But George Eliot had known childhood in earlier years. She was not obliged, like Herbert Spencer, to borrow a friend's child or two in order to study the workings and development of the human mind.

Although there were neither pets, human nor four-footed, nor games at the Priory, it was by no means a case of all work and no play. The founder of synthetic philosophy must be referred to on this head. The two ponderous volumes Herbert Spencer has devoted to his own life abound in references to his friend, hostess, and lawn-tennis partner!

It is not surprising to find that one of George Eliot's characteristics was diffidence of her own powers, and the philosopher found it no easy matter in early days to persuade her that she possessed all the gifts of a novel-writer. So sensitive was she regarding her own gifts, even after recognition, that Mr. Lewes used to put into a special drawer such reviews as were encouraging only. Onslaughts and animadversions were rigidly excluded. And did not Mr. Lewes once write to Spencer, "Marian is in the next room crying over the distresses of her young people."

Here is a witticism at the expense of a certain Dr. A—— who was remarkable for his tendency to dissent from whatever opinion another uttered. After a conversation in which he had repeatedly displayed this tendency, she said to him :

"Dr. A——, how is it that you always take your colour from your company?" "*I* take my colour from my company?" he exclaimed. "What *do* you mean?" "Yes," she replied, "the opposite colour."

Here is another delightful story, but not referring to the great novelist. Spencer used to attend the first Wagner concerts at the Albert Hall with friends. One day he relates : "As we came downstairs the lady of the party was accosted by an acquaintance with the question, 'Well, how did you like it?' to which her reply was, 'Oh, I bore it pretty well,' a reply which went far to express my own feelings."

How seriously, one might almost say how sacred, George Eliot regarded her calling the following story will show.

Her great friend Barbara, handsome, rich, spirited, generous, was one of those fortunate individuals who could never for an instant imagine herself an intruder, never conceive it possible that she should be in anybody's way, least of all in the way of those who loved her. One morning, with happy unconcern, she rang the Priory bell half an hour before lunch, and was admitted and announced.

Tender-heartedness itself, the novelist rushed out of her study, pale, trembling, agitated, her remonstrant "Oh, Barbara!" even more poignant than could have been Sir Isaac Newton's "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!" And quite certainly Diamond did not droop his ears, wag his tail, and with his eyes plead for forgiveness so pathetically as, ready to cry, poor Madame Bodichon murmured excuses then.

Ever on the alert where Polly's quietude and comfort were concerned, straightway Mr. Lewes emerged from his study and, as the culprit related, coaxed and soothed her as if she had been a child.

This, I believe, is the single occasion on which the close friendship of these two noble and contrasted women was for a moment clouded.

Contrasted they were physically and intellectually. Barbara Bodichon, née Leigh Smith, was everything that George Eliot was not. If the rare lot of supernumerary gifts ever fell to any woman, that one was the foundress of Girton College. Not that she was an Admirable Crichton in petticoats. Although half her life was spent in France and she married a Frenchman, she never mastered French grammar or idiom. To the last she would speak of *à ma maison* instead of *chez moi.* She could no more spell her own language than could Queen Elizabeth. Although very fond of music, she never

acquired sufficient facility to play the simplest of Haydn's easy sonatas. Except, indeed, as a delightful artist in water-colours, and in that field regarded as an amateur, she might be described as the most unaccomplished member of a highly distinguished *milieu*.

But she was destined to live among the great, and what in ordinary cases would have proved a disastrous upbringing developed her remarkable endowments of heart, wit, and brain. Thus was exemplified Selden's famous saying: "Wit and wisdom are born with a man." So suited to her was her early education—in a certain sense, we may say, lack of it—that when twelve years old everything she said was worth listening to; without an approach to precociousness, she talked well. Later, alike in English and in French, despite utter disregard of grammar and syntax, she was a brilliant and suggestive talker. I have heard Frenchmen extol her conversational powers, so full was it of wit, acuteness, and originality.

And if she failed in perhaps the one personal object nearest her heart, if she is still regarded as an amateur by connoisseurs and the art-world generally, she has achieved a rare and enviable reputation. What indeed do not two generations of English-speaking women already owe her in the matter of education, and to-day what do not her sex owe her? To be one of the first, most intrepid, and

most liberal advocates of parliamentary equality, at last has come posthumous triumph. Let us hope that the newly enfranchised will prove themselves worthy of the privilege!

To Mr. and Mrs. Lewes came years of almost seclusion, fabulous prosperity, alike intellectual and material, but the ambition of Grace and Amelia was not fulfilled. No royal honours were showered upon the greatest novelist of the age by the sovereign characterised as "sour and unattractive" by another "illustrious Victorian."[1] No Order of Merit for women was likely to be instituted by a queen who said that suffragettes ought to be whipt.[2] But George Eliot held the reading world in fee. I have heard on excellent authority that *Romola* brought her a cheque for £8000 down. And good fortune was wisely made the best of by both. A pretty country house was purchased at Witley in Sussex, drives in their own carriage replaced the long walks of earlier days, Mrs. Lewes saying to her friend Barbara, who visited them in their new home:

"Of course *you* did not acknowledge us till we kept a carriage."

She could jest then, but the days of playfulness were short. Their holiday had come too late for overworked brains and physiques of hardly normal robustness.

[1] See *Recollections by Viscount Morley* (Macmillan, 1917).
[2] See *Diary of Queen Victoria.*

Mr. Lewes died in 1878, and on the morning of May 6, 1880, Madame Bodichon received a note from her great friend saying that she was to be married that day to Mr. J. W. Cross. I cannot do better that cite the following passage from *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, written by R. Holt Hutton:

"After the death of Mr. Lewes, George Eliot, who was always exceedingly dependent upon some one person for affection and support, fell into a very melancholy state, from which she was rescued by the solicitous kindness and attention of Mr. John Cross, an old friend of her own and of Mr. Lewes's, and to him she was married on the 6th of May 1880. Their married life lasted but a few months. George Eliot died in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on the 22nd of December of the same year, and is buried in Highgate Cemetery in the grave next to that of Mr. Lewes."

Madame Bodichon outlived her by eleven years, but thrice happier for her had it been otherwise.

Always endeavouring to crowd the activities and achievements of a dozen lives into one, both bodily and mental powers gave way under the strain. Restfulness she never knew, and the close of a noble and fruitful life was of sad helplessness and invalidism. The crowning monument to her memory is her College of Girton.

Mr. Cross's biography of George Eliot is a

classic, but it must not be forgotten that he is a noteworthy Dante scholar.[1] We have read how among her last literary recreations were Dante studies under his guidance, and we can understand how she would glow over the lines:

> "Light intellectual replete with love,
> Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
> Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness."

How satisfactory the reflection that the biographer was in every respect worthy of his subject, as he had been of the love and confidence called forth by his devotion.

Let me in conclusion allude, not to the creator of Hetty Sorrel or Silas Marner, of Mr. Casaubon, Dorothea, and Celia, but to the deep thinker on grave problems. Is not genius prescient always, the poet ever a seer, the "greatly dreaming" man or woman ever a prophet?

During one of those long talks in the Isle of Wight, 1870–1871, the subject of Governments came up.

"A time will of course come, dear Barbara," said George Eliot, in her slowly enunciated, thoughtful way, "when royalties will disappear" (I believe the word "caste" was used also, but am not sure). "Kings and queens will be pensioned off, with cushions for their feet."

[1] See *Impressions of Dante and of the New World*, by J. W. Cross (Blackwood, 1903).

Are we not much nearer this period than we think? Are not all thrones tottering, Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns trembling before Time and his hour-glass, inherited privileges, unearned prerogatives doomed to speedy and eternal disappearance? Let us hope so.

I add a note from Mr. Cross:

QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
ST. JAMES'S PARK, S.W.,
July 6, 1908.

DEAR MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,—Many thanks for your note, which has been forwarded to me here. At this time of the year I am always more in London than in Tunbridge Wells. It is indeed long since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, and I had never heard that you had been laid up. But I am very glad to hear that you are now fairly well again. I should very much enjoy coming over one afternoon for a chat, and I will try if I can manage it; but I am going away shortly to Switzerland, and my time is very much occupied in the meanwhile. However, if I can't get to Hastings before going abroad, I will certainly come over when I return, as I should like to see you again and exchange views with you.—Yours very sincerely, J. W. CROSS.

Here is the only letter I ever received from George Eliot, and a charming one it is; her exquisite handwriting in itself a lesson to us all, scribblers that we are!

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK, *January* 5, 1872.

MY DEAR MISS EDWARDS,—We have been to Weybridge for a few days, and I did not succeed in finding a few minutes to thank you for your letter on Monday morning before we set out.

Any sign of remembrance from you will always be welcome, even without such sweet and encouraging words as you wrote about what I have done.

I am rather a wretch just now, apt to be more conscious of a disordered liver than of all the better things in the world. I hope you are freer than you were from such bodily drawbacks. Madame Belloc assured me that you were, and that you looked unusually strong.

Mr. Lewes and I often revive the memory of you with pleasure (it is about the anniversary of our acquaintance with you); he unites his wishes with mine that the year may bring you new blessings.—Always yours sincerely, M. E. LEWES.

Yet a postscript more about the foundress of Girton College and George Eliot's most intimate friend.

Long ago Madame Bodichon's writings ought to have been collected, edited, and published by some grateful beneficiary of her foundation. Not a bit of it! As I have before said, and I reaffirm it now, the disloyalty, ingratitude, and jealousy of women towards each other is flagrant and will ever with

me remain an unanswerable objection to women's political advancement.

Here is a list of these terse, lucid, admirably-written expositions, in so far as I know not one having been reprinted. Most likely Girtonians have never heard of them, and if so, would very likely shake their heads over "poor, second-rate stuff." See "On the Girl of the Period," Mr. Frederic Harrison, *Fortnightly Review*, February 1918, true as the satire is biting.

(i) *A brief Summary in plain language of the most important Laws of England concerning Women, together with a few observations thereon,*" by Barbara L. S. Bodichon. Third edition with additions. Trubner & Co. London, 1869. Price 1s.

(ii) *Reasons for and against the Enfranchisement of Women*, by Mrs. Bodichon. Spottiswoode & Co. London, 1869.

(iii) *Illustrations of the Operation of our Laws as they affect the Property, Earnings, and Maintenance of Married Women.* Edinburgh, 1867. Price 1d.

(No name given, but undoubtedly the work of Madame Bodichon. A marginal note points to a knowledge of French law, unlikely to be possessed by an Englishwoman.)

A generation earlier, wrote Herbert Spencer (*Autobiography*, p. 149), a conspicuous part had been played in public life by Madame Bodichon's father, Mr. William Smith, for many years Member of Parliament for Norwich. His were times during which immense sums were lost over contested elections, and he is said to have spent three fortunes in this way: not for the gratification of personal ambition, but prompted by patriotic motives. For, himself a Unitarian, he was the leading representative of the much-oppressed Dissenters, and it was he who, by untiring efforts, finally succeeded in obtaining the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts. Various of his descendants have been conspicuous for their public spirit, philanthropic feeling, and cultivated tastes. From the eldest son, his father's successor in Parliament, descended Mr. Benjamin Leigh Smith, whose achievements as an Arctic explorer are well known, and Madame Bodichon, of note as an amateur artist and active in good works. One of the daughters became Mrs. Nightingale of Lea Hurst, and from her, besides Lady Verney, came Miss Florence Nightingale.

Among the younger sons was Mr. Octavius Smith, who might be instanced in proof of the truth —very general but not without exception—that originality is antagonistic to receptivity. For having in early life been somewhat recalcitrant under the ordinary educational drill, he was in later

life distinguished not only by independence of thought, but by marked inventiveness — a trait which stood him in great stead in the competition which, as the proprietor of the largest distillery in England, he carried on with certain Scotch rivals. Energetic in a high degree, and having the courage and sanguineness which comes from continued success, he was full of enterprises, sundry of them for public benefit. Partly because of the personal experiences he had in various directions of the obstacles which governmental interferences put in the way of improvement, and partly as a consequence of the fact that, being a man of vigour and resource, he was not prone to look for that aid from State agencies which is naturally invoked by incapables, he was averse to the meddling policy, much in favour then, and still more in favour now. One leading purpose of *Social Statics* being that of setting forth both the iniquity and the mischief of this policy, a lady who knew Mr. Octavius Smith's views planned an introduction ; and this having been made, there was initiated an acquaintanceship which afterwards grew into something more.

I have been very fortunate in my friendships, and not the least so in that with Mr. Octavius Smith. In later years I owed to him the larger part of my chief pleasures in life.

The Member for Norwich was an original, and evidently loved to contravene social mandates,

taking his little daughters out for drives on Sunday in their ordinary frocks and pinafores, and otherwise throwing the gauntlet at public opinion—even objecting to the shibboleth, as he regarded it, of baptism.

How proud would he have been had he lived to see the fruition of his efforts! How he would have gloried in Barbara's name and fame! It was not to be. But there is fortunately a prescience in the parental mind. Doubtless as the old man lay dying with the map of Algeria on his pillow, reminder of that beloved child long since lost to him in a double sense—by a French marriage and by a thousand miles of sea—he felt that she would do more and more credit to his name as the years wore on, and that without vaingloriousness he could here take credit to himself.

Here are a few samples of Madame Bodichon's wit, humour, and repartee.

On high thought and small snobberies :

"I lunched the other day at the Deanery (with Dean and Lady Augusta Stanley) to meet Mr. Gladstone. There was served a cut gooseberry pie. That pie doing double duty is a standing lesson to my housekeeper, and now she has to bring to table pies that have been begun."

On other snobberies :

"My leg-of-mutton dinners, as I call them, I began in Algeria. Whenever rich people dined

with me, I gave them just anything. When poorly paid French functionaries were invited, I always provided a sumptuous repast."

(In London the leg-of-mutton dinners were also the rule, and not, perhaps, always accepted with a good grace. When the table was set the hostess would also go round with a bottle of water, and well dilute the half-filled decanters of sherry and claret.)

Madame Bodichon had a rough-and-ready way of treating practical details. When travelling with her in Spain, she found me puzzling over pesetas, doubloons, and the rest.

"Why trouble your little head about Spanish money?" she said, and bringing out her purse laid on the table an English shilling, a two-shilling piece, a half-sovereign, and a sovereign. "Now," she added, poising each coin and its Spanish equivalent by turns on her finger, "the weight of gold and silver will tell you nearly enough what the money represents." A neat and expeditious way of doing international sums, it seemed to me.

Other travelling maxims were equally original:

"Always travel with plenty of luggage. You are then sure to meet with attention and get the best of everything."

Another maxim, appropriate nowadays to France as well as to the Spain of forty years ago, was this:

"Stand on the platform by your handbags, and look helpless."

In many a provincial station to this day no porters appear: the traveller on arriving has to address himself to the stationmaster for help with hand luggage.

An advanced Liberal, a warm advocate of social reform, a practical-minded thinker, this noble Englishwoman was not always keen-sighted either in political matters or judging character.

"Thank Heaven," she said exuberantly, when John Bright's motion according votes to the agricultural labourer was passed, "we who are living now at least shall see no more Tory régimes in England."

The Act was followed by twenty years of Conservative government!

Misreading of character, or rather enthusiasm carried to the point of infatuation, would lead to cruellest disillusion. Upon one occasion she was thus nonplussed.

After a prolonged eulogy of some new protégée, whose numberless gifts and charms were to raise her to social and intellectual eminence,—who was, indeed, to set the world on fire in many places,—I asked mildly:

"What has this paragon, this feminine Admirable Crichton, achieved thus to raise your expectations?"

She thought for a moment or two, and at last got out:

"Well, she has given birth to a beautiful baby."

"My dear friend," I retorted, "she will not attain immortality by becoming the mother of a baby, however beautiful."

Like Herbert Spencer, whom she knew well, she loved to propound questions.

Thus, especially to younger friends, she would put the ethical problem:

"Would you rather possess beauty, or be the cause of beauty in others?"

She said that with herself the latter choice would kick the beam, meaning that the gift of physical attractions and charm, of æsthetic gifts, opportunities, and surroundings, would be outweighed by the power of putting all these in some measure within reach of others not thus endowed.

On men's choice of wives:

"What men like in women is something that smiles. Many prefer little rags of women."

On her sex's lot:

"Child-bearing is the battle-field of women."

On a sentimental lady saying, after revisiting the scenes of her early youth, that she felt as if by a longer stay she should recover her "childish innocence":

"I hope you have not lost it, have you?"

On Victor Hugo's dramas:

"To my thinking they are as fine as Shakespeare's."

On Zola and his school:

"Such stories are the reverse of realism. They are non-realistic because they do not represent life as it is."

On marriage (rather an unkind hit):

"Nothing delights me more than to hear of any man being refused by a woman. Such experiences put men in their right place."

On George Eliot:

"I suppose the time will come when all educated folks will write like George Eliot."

Presumably her meaning was that slipshod futility would give way to well-thought-out utterances and expressions, also to strictly philosophic studies of life and human nature.

To a friend who had given her a somewhat idealised photograph of herself — a quite anti-Aristotelian view, by the way, and suggestive of Cromwell:

"Take this back, and give me one with all your lines in it."

To the students of her college of Girton:

"You must make laws for yourselves."

About herself and her unorthodoxy, alike voluntary and involuntary:

"I am a rich woman, and therefore when I die

there will be no fuss about burying an unbaptized person in consecrated ground."

On setting up in her own house a night-school for farming lads—the teacher being a Wesleyan, and the teaching non-sectarian :

" I need not fear clerical interference, because I am rich."

Of novels :

" Folks must die in real life ; why they should die in novels I never could see."

Of friends :

" Some of our friends are roses, some are cabbages. Mrs. —— is a first-rate cabbage." To this a witty friend added : " And some are thorns ! "

In our Spanish travels I had excused extortion on the part of a guide because he was a very old man. She retorted : " Old age is no virtue."

On French amiability :

" The reason of French good nature is that children in France are always allowed their own way, their tempers not being soured by perpetual crossing and nagging."

On a prematurely aged and beardless man :

" So-and-so looks like the mummy of a boy."

On a book of travel dealing with art galleries, written by one uninitiated in art :

" The point that struck me about the book was the skill with which the writer has concealed her ignorance."

On a new novel by a friend :

"Your story has only one fault—there is no point in it."

We can generally appraise folks—*i.e.* thinking folks—by their maxims. A favourite citation with her was from the Koran : "If you have only enough money in your purse wherewith to buy flowers or bread, choose flowers and let the bread go."

Yet, intense as was her love of beauty, she ever remained practical of the practical. With her, in the words of the great Locke, "knowledge was seeing." Holding a few wild flowers in her hand, she would make the uninitiated understand points of vegetable physiology not easily got at through books.

And as there are limitations even in the highest developments of intellect and character, so was it here. Herbert Spencer somewhere says that the proposition, two parallel lines can never meet, is unverifiable, because two parallel lines can never be followed infinitely. With Madame Bodichon, knowledge was seeing, as far as it went ; but there ever remained the beyond, the unverifiable.

Had her brother, Benjamin Leigh Smith, as she fondly hoped, discovered the North Pole in 1870–71, her first query on his return would have been :

"Well, Ben, and what lies beyond?"

Like the immortal Vathek of "England's richest son," she "wished to know everything ; even sciences that did not exist."

On the Grand Peut-être of Rabelais, the questions that have occupied philosophers and mystics since Plato's Phædo, she remained silent. So beset was she, not by a sense of her rights, but of her duties, that, like Wilberforce, she "had no time to think about her soul." Confident in the causes for which she had sacrificed so much, rationalist in the highest sense of the word, ardently believing that humanity was on the upward path, she accepted the inevitable with unswerving courage and calm. Neither disillusion, broken health, pain, nor grief had power to shake that commanding spirit. In a certain vital sense she was as unpractical as the most flighty-headed. A woman of ardent faith in individuals and causes and of abnormal activities, Goethe's excellent maxim for intellectual workers, "unhasting, unresting," she could never take to heart, always trying to make twelve hours do the duty of twenty-four, always taxing her mental and physical powers to the straining point.

I used to say to her: "My dear friend, excellently as you husband your material resources, in another and equally important sense you are ever on the verge of insolvency, without a pennyworth of reserve force to your credit."

And, true enough, bankruptcy came upon her as a thief in the night.

Barbara Bodichon was a spirited and convincing writer on the subjects she had at heart, but lacked

one invaluable sense—she could not read character, could not understand that others were less generous than herself. Thus we were chatting in her latter days, when she suddenly said :

"Now, Milly" (my family pet name), "you must write my life."

"Nothing easier, my dear friend," I replied, "nothing more to my mind ; but remember one thing. Rich women like yourself should make their wills long before, owing to mental and bodily failure, they fall into the clutches of toadies, sycophants, lick-spittlers, and other two-footed parasites whose names are legion in human form. And in making your will trust only to the disinterested, the *Man of Law.*"

She did not take my advice, and what became of the many precious documents thus falling into parasitic clutches her oldest friends never learned.

One or two would have straightway been returned to myself by any person possessed, say, of the faintest approach to honesty and self-respect. The first was a most careful transcript I had made of Barbara's prolonged stay in the Slave States of America before the war—a most interesting piece of history. Other papers of her own I had laboriously copied and revised. Then there were very valuable letters of noteworthy people, English, French, and American ; autographs that would fetch,

and doubtless did fetch for the purloiner, large sums —all, all swooped upon as the carrion kite swoops upon her prey.

As I have before insisted upon, women are very disloyal to each other.

Will it be believed that in a long article on Women's Education in Chambers's invaluable *Encyclopædia*, and which is written by a woman, the name of Barbara Bodichon, the foundress of the first university for women in England, is *not so much as mentioned*?

"Barbara Bodichon's portrait is in every European picture gallery," was wont to say an artist friend. Titianesque, indeed, were her superb colouring, golden hair, blue eyes perhaps too prominent, perfectly shaped mouth, and features humanly, not classically, beautiful. There was here no cold, stately classicism. Life exuberant and exuberating to the very full emanated from her presence, an afflatus once calling forth Browning's ejaculation:

"Madame Bodichon, what a benediction to see you!"

And a benediction to how many was her friendship!

As I am now taking leave of George Eliot and her circle, I here interpolate an interesting passage from Herbert Spencer.

In 1850 he writes (vol. i. p. 377):

"Already I have mentioned the fact that in the spring of 1850 I met Mr. G. H. Lewes, and that in the course of a walk home from a soirée a conversation between us produced mutual interest. When *Social Statics* came out he spoke highly of it, both privately and in public as literary editor of the *Leader*; and naturally, when we met again, a further step was taken towards intimacy. As we had many tastes and opinions in common, the intimacy grew rapidly.

"When the summer came there resulted country excursions together—the early ones being long Sunday rambles in Wimbledon Park, Richmond Park, etc., a companion on the first occasion being Mr. E. S. Pigott, now Licenser of Plays, and at that time interested in the *Leader* as one who subscribed part of the capital. Later in the season our excursions took a wider range. The longest of them was up the valley of the Thames—by railway to Slough and thence on foot to Cookham, where we slept; next day we went along on the Thames-bank by Marlow and on to Henley, where our day's walk ended; leaving there on the Monday we reached, by the help of a coach-drive, Pangbourne, and eventually Goring, where we stopped for the night; and next day we walked as far as Abingdon, whence we returned by railway. The expedition was a memorable one for both of us; not only because of its enjoyments, which were great, but also because of its mental results. It was to the impulse he received from the conversations during these four days that Lewes more particularly ascribed that awakened

interest in scientific inquiries which is referred to in an extract from his diary published in George Eliot's *Life*. And in me, observations on the forms of leaves set going a train of thought which ended in my writing an essay on 'The Laws of Organic Form,' an extended exposition of which occupies some space in the *Principles of Biology*. Later in the autumn, Kent was the scene of another ramble, Gravesend, Maidstone, and Cobham being among the places on our route. Lewes remarked at its close that the ramble had not been so rich in suggestions as the preceding one; but he had brought with him a volume by Milne-Edwards, and in it for the first time I met with the expression, 'the physiological division of labour.' Though the conception was not new to me, as is shown towards the end of *Social Statics*, yet the mode of formulating it was; and the phrase thereafter played a part in my course of thought.

"As a companion, Lewes was extremely attractive. Interested in and well informed upon a variety of subjects, full of various anecdote, and an admirable mimic, it was impossible to be dull in his company. Nowadays he is chiefly known by the contributions to philosophy in his *Problems of Life and Mind*; but his reputation was then mainly that of an extremely versatile man—a critic and writer on general literature, a novelist, a dramatist, an actor, an expositor of philosophy. This last combination recalls a droll incident in his career. He delivered a series of lectures on philosophy in the provinces, and, among other places, in Edinburgh.

There, after his last lecture had been given, the play-bills announced the *Merchant of Venice*, with Mr. Lewes in the part of Shylock. The dramatic element in the performance was, I doubt not, good, and I dare say his dramatic faculty justified the thought which he at one time entertained of going upon the stage; but his figure was not sufficiently impressive for many parts, and his voice was not effective.

"I knew nothing in those days of his domestic life, nor, indeed, of anything concerning him beyond that which our conversations disclosed. But alike then and afterwards I was impressed by his forgiving temper and his generosity. Whatever else may be thought, it is undeniable that he discharged the responsibilities which devolved upon him with great conscientiousness and at much cost in self-sacrifice, notwithstanding circumstances which many men would have made a plea for repudiating them."

IV

A VISIT TO BARON TAUCHNITZ

Since 1872 my works have regularly appeared from the Tauchnitz Press, greatly to my own advantage and, as I hope, not without amusement and instruction to Continental readers. One fact let me affirm. Had Baron Tauchnitz never paid English authors a penny, their gain would all the same have been immense. He obtained for them a vast, an unimaginably vast, public. No author, says "the wise-browed Goethe," should write unless he can count his readers by the million. The Leipzig Press brings us our million!

I was staying at Eisenach in 1880 when an invitation reached me from Schloss Kleinschocher. Nothing could be more agreeable than the prospect of two or three days in a country house just then. The season was June; woods and breezy walks lie within reach of Luther's town, but the place itself was becoming hot, crowded, and noisy. Pianoforte practice rendered the hotel insupportable by day, and supper-parties in the gardens adjoining made sleep impossible till long past midnight. At the

Leipzig station Baron Tauchnitz met me, little changed since I had seen him just ten years before. But for the slight accent of his otherwise excellent English, you might have taken the great publisher to be an English country gentleman. Half an hour's drive through a pleasant country brought us to a mansion worthy of a more musical name.

I was never, I wrote to a friend, in a more beautiful house : far and wide stretches a wooded park, whilst immediately around are flower-gardens and sweeps of turf so velvety as to recall our own lawns. And everything is of a piece within. We realise at once that we are not only in a most sumptuous home, but in one of the happiest and most cultured. Not that luxury is allowed to lend a material aspect. At Schloss Kleinschocher we breathe a literary atmosphere as completely as in the modest drawing-rooms of savants and *littérateurs* at Leipzig. On the tables of salon and boudoir lay the latest and best works in English, French, and German. The hostess, a grey-haired, tall, graceful lady, with very gentle manners, and her daughter, who welcomed me so kindly,—alas! with her parents this dearly-loved daughter is no longer among the living,—testified by their conversation to the widest culture. When Baron Tauchnitz—then the younger—with his charming wife joined us at the two o'clock family dinner, we talked—and, of course, in English—of books, music, and the drama. The drama, indeed,

forms so important an element in German life that it may be said to be part of daily existence. Baron Tauchnitz, with a smile, soon reminded me of this, and also of another fact—namely, of his excellent memory.

"When you first stayed in Leipzig," he said (just ten years before), "you witnessed *Lohengrin*. To-night, if agreeable, my daughter will accompany you to see *Preciosa*."

True enough, a seat in the Tauchnitz opera-box had been placed at my disposal on my former visit, and in company of the Baron and his son I had then enjoyed a first-rate performance of Wagner's opera; but it surprised me to find the incident remembered by one so busy. A stroll in the gardens, a visit from the grandchildren, tea, and the opera, filled that first pleasant day at Schloss Kleinschocher—Schloss Tauchnitz, I feel inclined to call it.

"Now you shall see *my* library, the real Tauchnitz library," said my host next morning, leading me to a large, handsome room, devoted to the 3040 volumes known under that name. At the time I write of, the number was much less, but already made a goodly show, the little volumes being all neatly yet handsomely bound in maroon calf with gilt lettering and edges, and placed in a handsome bookcase reaching from floor to ceiling. Truly the Baron has reason to be proud of his library—now

doubled; what author of voluminous works more so? No English-speaking person, least of all a contributor to the series, can gaze on this collection without feelings of pride and pleasure.

There are two circumstances especially to be borne in mind when reviewing Baron Tauchnitz's achievement: first and foremost, the originality of the undertaking; secondly, the high principles on which it has ever been conducted. When the felicitous notion of popularising English literature on the Continent first entered the Baron's mind, the only means of procuring an English book was to write to London for it. No international copyright existed, consequently any foreign publisher could reissue works printed in this country without asking an author's permission, to say nothing of paying for the privilege. Baron Tauchnitz entertained too much respect for literature in general, and for English literature in particular, to dream of such a system. He preferred the open, the magnanimous course, thereby not only furthering the progress of international intercourse, but paving the way for international copyright. The little Tauchnitz volume, so portable, so inexpensive, so well printed, forms a kind of literary currency: it prevents the English resident abroad from feeling exiled; it passes from hand to hand, spreading a knowledge alike of our classics and contemporary authors; lastly, it has been a powerful protest against the

piratical principle, the notion that sharpness in business may well take the place of straightforward dealing. To authors the gain has been twofold, the Baron not only adding very considerably to their incomes, but also establishing their reputation on the Continent.

Hardly less interesting than his Tauchnitz library at Schloss Kleinschocher is my host's collection of portraits and autograph letters. The photos of many English authors are here, whilst from all writers included in the Continental Series the Baron has received letters.

Take the following Sterne-like line from Thackeray:

"Don't be afraid of your English; a letter containing £ s. d. is always in pretty style."

Equally characteristic is the crabbed utterance of Carlyle:

"No transaction could be handsomer on your part. . . . The money account concerns me. Please attend to that as already said. Friendliness and help cannot be paid, but money can and always should."

How warm-hearted the frank sentences of Dickens:

"I have too great a regard for you and too high a sense of your honourable dealings to wish to depart from the custom we have already observed. Whatever price you put upon the book will satisfy me."

The author of *Lothair* wrote with equal cordiality, but in a wholly different style:

"The sympathy of a great nation is the most precious reward of authors, and an appreciation that is offered us by a foreign people has something of the character which we attribute to the fiat of prosperity. I accept your liberal enclosure in the spirit in which it is offered, for it comes from a gentleman whose prosperity always pleases me, and whom I respect and regard."

Here is an amusing extract from Longfellow:

"Your very generous addition to the original sum agreed upon between us is pleasant to me, less for the sum itself than for the trait of character it reveals in you and the proof of your liberal dealing. The contingency you allude to—namely, of my employing another Continental publisher—is about as remote as that of one of Dickens's characters, who bought at an auction a brass door-plate with the name of Thompson on it, thinking it possible that her daughter might marry someone of that name!"

The great publishing house familiar to every English-speaking traveller on the Continent is not to be confounded with an earlier and famous business of the same name. So early as 1796 Christopher Tauchnitz set up a printing press in Leipzig, from which latter were issued the cheap and handy

> "Little Greek books with the funny type
> They get up well at Leipzig,"

of which Robert Browning's Bishop Blougram speaks. These classics are still published by the million.

A nephew of this Christopher, Bernhard, first Baron von Tauchnitz, was destined to be not only a great publisher, but what the late Cotter Morison called "A moral inventor." Born in 1816, following the trade of his uncle, he began his Continental Series in 1841, of which 2600 had appeared in the following fifty years. Ennobled in 1860, this prince of pioneers was created one of the few Saxon life-peers in 1877. He died in 1895, surrounded by

> "That which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

Of the second Baron, alas! (1918) I cannot now get news. In my desk lies one of those familiar registered notes dated Leipzig, July 24, 1914, sealed with a T and containing a cheque and an agreement for my penultimate novel *From an Islington Window*. Thus runs the last sentence of a document that has almost a historic interest:

"I am sorry to say," wrote the right hand and maybe partner of my old friend, "that the Baron has not yet recovered from the severe illness which had befallen him in (*sic*) Spring. He is a little better, but the doctors cannot yet say when he will be completely restored to health. — With kind regards, yours sincerely, CURT OTTO."

A few days later war was declared with

Germany. My book, of course, was never published, and Dr. Otto was soon fighting against us. What became of him I do not know.

The Tauchnitz Continental Series came to an abrupt end, and to this day I cannot get news of the Baron. From his former English publisher and agents I obtain a similar reply. They can tell me nothing, and "a letter from me to Leipzig would do him harm."

Does he live still, and under what conditions? Has his colossal and honourably amassed fortune been wrenched from him? Perhaps none of his English friends will ever learn further news of their handsome, polished, affable host of the princely Schloss Kleinschocher.

V

AN AFTERNOON WITH LORD JOHN RUSSELL

"The chief political figure in fifty years of English history" (Lord Houghton to Lord Granville, Jan. 17, 1875).

It was in 1865 that I spent a long afternoon in the company of the "Lycurgus of the Lower House," as Sydney Smith styled the statesman on whom devolved the memorable honour of proposing the first Reform Bill.

From childhood I had been familiarised in *Punch* with the figure of "the little great man," almost dwarfed by his enormous hat, and who, like the great Sir Isaac Newton, was so diminutive at birth that he could be cradled in a quart pot! Our rather rough but good-natured rector, who, like the great Ipswich Cardinal, was a butcher's son, used occasionally to get numbers of the famous *Charivari* founded in 1841, and he never failed to bring them for us to enjoy. And just as willingly he would lend a pair of his own trousers to some needy parishioner unable to buy black for a funeral.

Thus, having already written two or three novels,

and travelled (rather lived) for a spell in Paris, Germany, and Vienna, I could fully appreciate the following invitation from Mrs. and Mr. (afterwards Sir Edwin) Chadwick : Would I lunch at Richmond the following day and afterwards accompany them with Lord and Lady Russell on a visit of inspection to the Poor Law School at Southall?

The Chadwicks were friends of Madame Bodichon, and I had already made their acquaintance. Nothing, therefore, could have been more agreeable than the proposed excursion.

Punctually to the moment, hosts and guests reached our half-way rendezvous. It had been arranged that the two carriages—in one, Lord and Lady Russell ; in the second, my hosts and self—should meet at a certain spot in the Hammersmith Road ; and true enough, there we were. But it was not till we reached our destination that I stood face to face with Lord John Russell.

Just ten years before, on the fall of the Derby Ministry, the outgoing Prime Minister had written to Lord Granville, saying, "I am very sorry that the country will lose one of the best Foreign Secretaries it ever had. . . . '*Tu Marcellus eris.*'"

I may as well take it for granted that some of my readers, like myself, have "small Latin and less Greek"; but Mr. Frederic Harrison, whose scholarship seems at his fingers' ends as in earlier

days, enables me to explain the allusion. "Ah, unhappy boy" (Virgil, *Æneid*, book vi. l. 884), "if you break the bitter fates, you will be Marcellus."

Marcellus, the only son of Octavia the sister of Augustus and his destined heir, died when nineteen. In Hades, Æneas was shown his ghost. When Virgil read this to Octavia, she fainted.

To return to my narrative. Surely the four quarters of the globe could not have furnished a greater contrast than the pioneer of reform and the initiator, we may almost aver the inventor, of sanitation.

Outwardly there was the difference of breadth, bulk, and inches; the contrast of a stalwart middle-class gentleman in his prime and an undersized elderly scion of as noble and historic family as any in England.

Did not, indeed, the great whig house of Russell trace its origin to Thor, the Hammerer and terror of giants?

Sir Edwin Chadwick, Earl Russell's junior by ten years, came of lowlier stock. Called to the Bar in 1830, his paper on Life Assurance had attracted the notice of no less an authority than Jeremy Bentham, and in 1883, on being named Secretary of the Poor Law Board, he devoted himself to the better administration of the Poor Law funds, public education, and especially to sanitation. If ever any

public benefactor deserved a niche in the Abbey it is he, and where is his statue?

Drainage was one of his especial subjects, and some unkind wit prognosticated a sad old age for its devotee. In his failing years Sir Edwin would fall a victim to a tragi-comic hallucination. He would imagine himself transformed into a monster drain-pipe, its ramifications spread throughout the entire kingdom.

No such calamity befell him. Sir Edwin enjoyed a hale old age, and many a pleasant afternoon I have spent with his charming wife, amiable young daughter, and himself in their beautiful home at Richmond.

Lady Russell accompanied us on the expedition in question, and evidently shared her husband's interest in the Home and training of the boys, several hundreds in number.

From the first moment my attention was held by the contrasted mental attitude of the two men. Each saw everything from an absolutely different point of view. Each set out from exactly opposite premises. Each would be no more likely to assimilate the other's view than two parallel lines to meet.

Sir Edwin Chadwick was an animated calculating machine, a walking squarer of the circle. Earl Russell's concern was with generalities, with mankind in the gross, with the human side of everything.

Patiently he listened to our host as he expatiated upon figures, the cost to a farthing per head of every child in the school, and also of every item outside maintenance and instruction. Meantime the inspection went on, and from dining-hall, school-rooms, and lavatories we went upstairs.

Here Sir Edwin's pride was really pathetic. Each occupant of the enormous dormitory we now entered seemed dear to him as if of his own blood.

It was now late in the afternoon, and the vast sleeping quarters were flooded with warm effulgence. Almost blinding was the brilliance of the westering sun ; one's unlidded eyes might as well have been exposed on a mountain top !

Will it be believed ? From ceiling to floor stretched windows, unshuttered, uncurtained, without blinds, the children therefore being in the position of Norwegian sight-seers. Hardly sunset, hardly sundown could be experienced here, from eight at night till eight in the morning, at this season of the year daylight prevailing.

Lord Russell looked, listened, hum'd, haw'd whilst his exuberant host rattled on. Who so hard to be stopped in his torrent of words as a propagandist ? At last he turned to Sir Edwin Chadwick with the remark :

" But what about the children's eyes ? "

The remark betokened the man. Just as in moments of national and political stress he had seen

far beyond immediate results, he now recognised the stone blindness of benevolent reformers. There flashed before his vision the blear-eyed, blinking, permanently injured young toilers to whom sight was their most precious possession, generation after generation thus handicapped in the struggle for daily bread.

Whether the hint was taken, whether ophthalmia was stayed in its deadly course, I never heard. On writing lately to the Board of Education for information on this and other points, I learned that the Southall School had long been closed.

I shall never forget those hours spent in the company of the great Liberal leader, and afterwards regretted one omission on my part. "Before you choke me with your praise, Madam," thundered Johnson to a fair enthusiast, "remember what your praise is worth." I never venture to compliment my betters. But might not a word or two as to Lord John's achievements in belles-lettres from an accredited authoress have here afforded pleasure? How aptly would have come in, say, a quotation from one of his twenty works, above all from his romances or two tragedies! I proudly recall the fact that my own works and those upon France were not unknown to him, and that I spent a long afternoon in the society of the great pioneer of reform, truly Reddest of Red-letter days in my calendar!

The Life of Lord Granville,[1] 1815–1891, vividly recalls surely the most nicknamed, or shall I say pet-named, statesman in history. Johnny he always was, alike in the mouths of supporters or adversaries. In 1859 Lord Clarendon wrote to Lord Granville that a closer acquaintance with the Italian imbroglio —not to mention other subjects—had, he fancied, "considerably abated the *veni, vidi, vici* sort of feeling with which Johnny had taken possession of that bed of roses, the Foreign Office."

In 1867 Lord Coleridge wrote to a friend: "I had a very pleasant dinner with Lord John on Wednesday. We were but seven. . . . Johnny remains as you left him—very cocky, restless, and physically strong." And later on he adds: "I dined at Chesham Place on Wednesday—an education dinner. Bright was to have been there but did not appear. . . . Lord Russell made a long speech giving us a history of popular education beginning with the time of Henry IV. (of France)."

This memorable speech was far in advance of the time, and Lord Granville wrote to the Duke of Argyll that he spoke with more power and animation than he had ever heard him. But it was a valedictory oration, and fainting fits were followed by signs of failing strength and diminished powers.

[1] *The Life of the Second Earl Granville*, by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. Longmans, 1905.

The wonderful old man (he was now seventy-five) was far, however, from being an extinct volcano. These volumes seem to bring his times very near our own. We here find one politician writing to another "of the Manchester School and Reform agitators being quite satisfied with Johnny chief and Gladstone leader." In 1868 Lord Granville wrote to Gladstone that "Johnny's proposed public dinner is a difficult one. If he persists in giving one, I do not know how you can avoid giving another." The difficulty was neatly got over. Gladstone's house was being painted, and it was impossible for him to give a dinner to the Opposition leaders of the House of Commons at his own table. Lord John decided that the "smell of paint being bad for friends at dinner would not be innocuous to friends in council," and the council was held.

Lord John Russell's leading characteristic was unbounded faith in himself. "The great little man was unshakably sure of his own judgment," as one of his biographers has said. "He knew he was right gives the key to both his career and his character."

It is pleasant to read that relaxation came in the way of so indomitable a worker. In 1819 he travelled with Tom Moore in Italy, the latter having crossed the Channel to avoid arrest, despite the fact that he had lately received three thousand guineas for *Llalla Rookh*, a poem certainly not worth the

money. Lord John afterwards edited the poet's works in eight volumes, 1852–56.

One of my own books is named in his biography. This is *Earl of Paris* (Hurst & Blackett), in which is an account of the historic little town of St. Jean de Loyne in Upper Burgundy.

VI

HENRY JAMES

I

Dear Henry James! My heart glows as I recall our long, warm friendship, from first to last not the faintest cloudlet casting a shadow. We valued, I may say we loved, each other, with a brotherly, sisterly affection deeper, more sympathetic perhaps than are often these blood relationships. On neither side was there exaggeration or conventionality. Our respective literary achievements for the most part were not touched upon. Indeed, the only direct criticism he ever passed on a novel of mine was the reverse of flattering.

On June 9, 1913, he had written: "I am very glad to hear of the good fortune of your *Lord of the Harvest*" (just included in the Oxford World's Classics). But alas! the gilt was soon taken off the gingerbread. A little later he paid me a visit, and referring to the story, which he had read, "I should have liked more of a tangle," he said; and, as far as I remember, that was the only direct

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allusion he made to any work of mine. Indirectly I learned from other sources that he especially valued my studies of French life and literature. And was not his friendship the highest of all compliments?

Our meetings were arranged in this way. I would get a telegram from Rye, answer prepaid, to this effect:

"Can you receive me at five o'clock this afternoon?" and of course the answer was always Yes. At five precisely his cab would climb the hill, stopping short at a sharp curve of the road, many drivers refusing to attempt an ascent so difficult for their hacks.

Thus it happened now, and well I remember how laborious and painful the footing of that hundred yards or so proved to my great visitor. He had hardly passed his prime, but was ponderously built and moved with the heaviness of age.

Once having regained breath in my little parlour on the ground floor—I never invited him to my study above, although there were many treasures there that would have interested him—he settled himself entirely to his satisfaction. The first thing he did was to study the physiognomy of his hitherto unknown hostess. Indeed, before opening his lips he looked me through and through with those large eyes that seemed to see below the surface of others. Then, that rather staggering attention over, he

glanced from the window with its matchless view, wide sweep of sea, red-roofed old town nestled amid verdant heights, high above the walls of the Conqueror's castle crowning the panorama.

Next he looked immediately about him, and I never knew anyone so sensitive to surroundings.

"What a chair is this!" he said. "It has a positive psychology of its own."

The chair in question was a present to me from India, of native cane, high-backed, its proportions exactly suited to the frame and well cushioned; it invited to repose but not inanition.

Then, after a glance at the opposite wall, he added:

"And those fine old engravings."

These were heirlooms, views of my native Ipswich with its twelve churches and fine river and of Bury St. Edmunds with its noble Abbey Gate and ruined tower.

"And yonder magnificent old oak chest?"

"Ah!" I replied, "that is my most cherished heirloom."

A bridal chest, perhaps destined for some noble bride imitating royal example, this curio had long been in the De Betham family, and had indeed served as my mother's linen chest.

It is a most beautiful and highly elaborate specimen of English workmanship, highly polished, its panels showing inlaid canaries and pomegranate,

fruit and foliage, under the splendid lock inlaid the figures *1626.*

1626, the year of Charles the First's second Parliament, the year in which, on hearing that Eliot had branded his favourite Buckingham as Sejanus, he had uttered the threat, "If then he is Sejanus, I must be Tiberius"—which he tried to be to his cost!

Henry James next examined the family portraits on the side wall, all three sitters of which have a place in Sir Sidney Lee's *Dictionary of National Biography*—the Rev. W. Betham, Sir William Betham, Ulster king-at-arms, and Matilda Betham. And here I made an unlucky remark.

"Yonder old cleric, my grandfather," I narrated, "a curate for the greater part of his life, lived to be ninety-two and without ever having lost his health or his temper. A few days before his death, as he slowly paced the room leaning on my mother's arm, he made a pun: 'I am walking very slowly, Barbara, but I am going very fast.'"

"A delightful record, but I could have wished without the pun," was my visitor's comment.

I took no notes of those delightful monologues, nor was it necessary; they imprinted themselves on the memory.

I remember well his description of Sarah Bernhardt's impersonation of Jeanne d'Arc, of the wonderful way with which she baffled her tor-

mentors, keeping them at bay, foiling every trap laid for her tongue.

Of France and French subjects we talked much, and yet have Henry James's novels found favour in the land *par excellence* of crystal clear speech and logical expression?

He would sit down to the tea-table, though rarely taking tea, and of course I could not help talking of his own books. One I mentioned with great appreciation, the inimitable *Three Meetings*. This was on the occasion of his second visit, whereupon he said quickly:

"You shall have my new book."

"No," I said, glancing at my faithful maid in attendance, "pray give her one instead."

"Do you like reading?" he asked; and on her hearty reply in the affirmative, he said:

"I will, I will, I will."

True enough, the promise was kept, and some time after a copy of *The Better Sort* duly arrived, having on the fly-leaf the following inscription:

"*To Emily Morgan, with all good wishes.*
HENRY JAMES."

Jan. 5, 1912.

And with it this letter to myself:

"I can now tell you the sad story of the book for Emily Morgan, which I am having put up to go to you with this, as well as explain a little my long silence. The very day, or the very second after

last seeing you, a change suddenly took place, under great necessity, in my then current plans and arrangements. I departed under that stress for London, practically to spend the winter, and have come back but for a very small number of days, and I return there next week.

"'But,' you will say, 'why didn't you send the promised volume to E. M. from London, then? What matters to us where it came from so long as it came?' To which I reply: 'Well, I had in this house a small row of books available for the purpose and among which I could choose. In London I should have to go and *buy* the thing, my own production, while I leave two or three brand-new volumes, which will be an economy to a man utterly depleted by the inordinate number of copies of *The Outcry* which he has given away and of which he has had to pay for —his sanguinary (admire my restraint!) publisher allowing him half!' 'Why, then, couldn't you write home and have one of the books sent you, or have it sent to Hastings directly from your house?' Because I am the happy possessor of a priceless parlourmaid who loves doing up books and other parcels and does them up beautifully, and if the vol. comes to me here, to be inscribed, I shall then have to do it up myself, an act for which I have absolutely no skill and which I dread and loathe, and tumble it forth clumsily and insecurely. Besides, I was vague as to which of my works I did have on the accessible shelf (and I only know I had some, and would have to look and consider and decide). And the thing will be beautifully wrapped. 'That's all very well:

but why, then, didn't you write and explain why it was that you were keeping us unserved and uninformed?' Oh, because from the moment I go up to town I *plunge*, plunge into the great whirlpool of postal matters, social matters, etc."

I do not give the rest.

Note his redundancy—a couple of pages and dozens of words when two lines would have sufficed.

His last note, dated August 13, 1914, thanked me for my welcoming him "into this ancient fold," *i.e.* his naturalisation as a British subject on the outbreak of the war.

And his last visit—a most delightful one despite an inauspicious beginning—was paid in the autumn of that year.

I have already explained that his cab always stopped just below High Wickham Terrace, drivers refusing to try their hacks' knees with the short, sharp upward hundred yards or so, and still more fearful of their nerves if putting them to the downward ordeal. Hitherto my visitor had footed the corner without apparent difficulty. This time he arrived breathless and almost in a state of collapse. The intervening years and the war had aged him greatly.

Fortunately, a physician was at hand. My good friend and benefactor, Dr. Dodson Hessey, happened to call just before, and at my instance waited to renew an acquaintance that had previously proved

highly agreeable to both. "A nice man," had been Henry James's summing-up after their first meeting, and, as I have shown, no one was less addicted to compliments. Vainly did the doctor now advise a cordial. The very mention of brandy made the patient worse. However, he did induce him to take a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter, these very seldom indulged in when visiting me, and, gradually reviving, Henry James was himself again. A genial, animated, and generous self he became, giving us of his best.

Over an hour's tripartite conversation we enjoyed, turning upon literature and winding up with lady novelists of the day—Miss Braddon, Miss Broughton, and, gallantly added the author of *Daisy Miller*:

"Miss Betham-Edwards, whom I love best of all."

Had he dubbed me a second George Eliot on the spot, I could not have crowed more.

I give one of the last letters I received from him. The others appear in his Life.

LAMB HOUSE, RYE, SUSSEX,
August 16, 1911.

DEAR MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,—All thanks for your kind note. I *am* back in England, after a whole year's absence and terrible period of six or seven months of extreme and confining illness, mostly in my bed, for six or seven months before that. I was spoiling for that dire collapse when

we last communicated in the autumn of 1909. I was to have gone over to see you then, but was in the event unable either to go or to make you a sign. Then began the very bad time on which I hope my return to England now will have finally and strongly closed the gates. I will make you with pleasure that so long-delayed visit, but I will, by your leave, wait till the "holiday" (God save the mark!) turmoil of communication between this and Hastings shall have somewhat abated. It's a sorry squeeze now—and long drawn out with delays. I rejoice to infer that you remain stalwart and patient and good-humoured—as I try withal to do—even if we neither of us emulate the surprising Hale White.[1] This is disappointing of him—a false note in his fine figure. However! I shall make you a sign by and by and appear; and am all faithfully yours,

HENRY JAMES.

[1] Mark Rutherford, whose novels he admired. I forget to what incident this remark refers. Alas! I never saw him again.

VII

AMELIA BLANDFORD EDWARDS, 1831–1890

"A born Amalgam"[1]

The foundress of the first chair of learning since the days of Dorothy Wadham was far and away the cleverest woman I ever knew. Cousin on the paternal side, Cockney born and bred, and, in a creditable sense, precocious of the precocious, when ten years old she won the prize offered for a temperance story, and as she grew to womanhood showed a quite extraordinary capacity for assimilating knowledge without the drudgery of attaining it.

"I can always teach myself anything better than I can learn it," she once said to me, and, as far as I know, she never had an hour's schooling or a governess at home. Like Topsy, she "grow'd," and to a brilliant maturity. If her powers of assimilation did duty for painstaking, so with her did intuition stand in the place of experience.

Her mother was a lively Irishwoman of the Walpole family, her father a Peninsular officer, and

[1] "In many narrow passages of public life Lord Granville seemed a born amalgam."—*Times* Obituary Notice, April 16, 1891.

she was born in that dreary cul-de-sac Westmorland Place, City Road, London, in 1830, thus being six years my senior.

How it came about I know not that, unlike his brothers, my uncle Thomas did not become a farmer, but was presented with a commission.

On his retirement on half-pay he obtained a post in the London and Westminster Bank, thenceforward spending his yearly fortnight's holiday with my own family near Ipswich. The most taciturn of men, he would occasionally be drawn into a word or two about the battle of Corunna, at which he had been present, and as he spoke of a commanding officer "stepping into the shoes" of his fallen leader, I used to wonder how this could be, and how very unlikely it was that the shoes would fit at all comfortably! Oddly enough, he had made friends with a foeman, and in token of good fellowship this French officer, at parting, presented him with ten guineas to be spent on a ring, which was done. The ring, containing a single diamond, was left by Amelia to myself, and proudly I wear such a precursor of an Entente Cordiale as yet undreamed of by the most Utopian.

That taciturnity of her father used to trouble Amelia. "I fear I shall grow as silent as himself," she used to say; a prognostic that fortunately did not come true. She only spoke one language, her own, but that one, as she wrote it, with exquisite

purity and elocution, and, as we shall see, she became a highly appreciated lecturer in the United States. Her talent for acting and love of the stage were stimulated by frequent visits to Sadler's Wells and other places of entertainment, euphemistically described by her mother as "minor theatres."

How many careers invite the richly endowed! How difficult is it for the non-gifted to find acceptance by any! Literature, the stage, declamation were all well within the scope of this rarely gifted girl, who, although busiest of the busy, ever found time for frolic and escapade. Nothing delighted her so much as *camouflage*—in other words, taking people in; as we Suffolkers say, making them look a gaby.

When with her mother she stayed at our farmhouse she gave full play to her high spirits, and of course was allowed pranks.

Thus on entering the schoolroom one day when we were at tea with our very demure governess, she took up a thick slice of bread and butter and exclaimed, "Who will dare me to throw this out of the window?" No answer forthcoming, out went the bread and butter.

Later, she loved to dress up in boy's clothes, and one day thus disguised frightened a homely neighbour almost out of her wits. The comely farmeress was sipping her tea when, acting the

spruce young Londoner, she suddenly flung herself on the floor with clasped hands, crying:

"Mrs. Smith, I adore you!"

Upon another occasion she had been for a ride with one of my brothers, and, looking very solemn and speaking under his breath, he said as he entered the entrance without her:

"Poor Amy" (her pet name) "has had a bad fall, and I have come for wraps and cushions, and Dick" (our house lad) "to help me to bring her in."

Hardly were the words out of his lips than followed a ringing laugh—oh, what a laugh she had!—and the culprit appeared, quite relishing the excitement she had created.

But Amelia's days of sober work began early. Before beginning her novels, which, once begun, followed each other in quick succession, she was the paid organist of a north London church and a teacher of harmony and counterpoint. How, when, and where she acquired so much knowledge, Heaven knows! Not only did she understand the theory of music, but was an accomplished musician, at home alike on piano, organ, and guitar. To her I owe my first lessons on the piano, and introduction to the great masters. Every afternoon she gave me a music lesson. Fostered in after years, how much pleasure has this taste afforded me; and as I play favourite bits of Beethoven from memory

during winter twilights, I gratefully recall that painstaking teacher.

Her first novel, *My Brother's Wife*, appeared in 1855, and was quickly followed by a warmly welcomed series, all now accessible in cheap editions. Earning money as she did, she could afford travel, and Italy was the lodestar. It is to these Italian sojourns that we owe her crowning success, *Barbara's History*, 1864, which ought to figure in the World's Classics or some equally important set of Victorian *chefs d'œuvre*.

The story had an immense success, winning a quite uncommon eulogium in the *Times* and elsewhere. Translations into several European languages followed, and the authoress immediately became a *persona grata* in the eyes of publishers. One firm lost no time in soliciting a new novel, and offered her eleven hundred pounds down for a speedy successor!

Amelia proved a cruel stepmother to her literary offspring. No sooner had *Barbara's History* filled her pockets and set her on a level with the best Victorian romancers than she turned her back on story-telling altogether and seemed not to care a jot what became of *Barbara's History* and its brethren. Had she attained the Psalmist's three score and ten years, quite certainly her next passion, Egyptology, would have been thrown to the winds and one or two other subjects as enthusiastically

taken up. Who knows? She might have thrown herself heart and soul into the Woman's Rights agitation, and by her brilliant lead and powers of elocution have antedated victory by a generation. Not only might we have had in her a powerful stateswoman and party leader, but a lady Prime Minister.

The fates willed otherwise; very enviably she died in the plenitude of intellectual powers, and was thus saved from that death in life—a vacant, inactive, and colourless old age.

Amelia's good—and in one sense evil—genius was ever seducing her to fresh fields and pastures new. And every new literary enterprise added to her laurels. *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, 1877, was the last turning-point of her career. She became the foundress and honorary secretary of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, and devoted all her energies to Egyptology, contributing papers on the subject to European and American journals. Her scholarship brought her several degrees from America, among these a doctorate from Columbia. In 1889, not without misgivings on the part of her friends, she yielded to the solicitations of American admirers, and with a friend sailed for a lecturing tour in the United States. The undertaking ended fatally. In descending an ill-lighted flight of steps before a lecture, just before embarkation for home, she slipped down, and, despite the shock to her system and pain in her head, insisted

upon not disappointing the expectant and immense audience.

She reached England safely, but never recovered her health, and died in 1889 aged sixty years. She rests in the churchyard of Westbury-on-Trym near Bristol, and was followed to the grave by more than one distinguished Egyptologist, thus showing her the last honour.

Amelia B. Edwards reaped harvests in many fields, and among her titles of honour none is more deserved than that of scholarship.

In 1879 Messrs. Longman issued two volumes from her pen—*A Poetry-Book of Elder Poets* and *A Poetry-Book of Modern Poets, English and American*—which for learning, critical acumen, and comprehensiveness rank with the best works of the kind in any language. The abundant notes show how much care she gave to this labour of love. Take the following Notes to the first series, p. 162 :

Love-slain—Shakespeare :

> "Come away, come away, Death,
> And in sad cypress let me be laid."

Sad cypress, meaning Cyprus lawn, of which shrouds were made and which was first made in the Isle of Cyprus.

Also the following on Sir Walter Raleigh's line :

> "Were her tresses angel-gold."

An angel was an old English coin worth about ten shillings and of a finer quality of gold than that known as crown gold.

Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing* in his soliloquy about the sort of woman he could love says: "Fair or I'll never look on her, Mild or come not near me, Noble or not I for an angel." The pun upon the two coins, the Noble and the Angel, seems to have escaped the observation of commentators.

Now for the modern poets. Here is a note upon J. Blanco White's famous sonnet *Night and Death*:

Coleridge pronounced this sonnet the best in the English language, and Leigh Hunt adds that "in thought it stands supreme, perhaps above all in any language." Our admiration is almost exceeded by our wonder when it is remembered that the author was born and brought up in Spain, was no longer young when he came to England, and then spoke English like a foreigner.

Mrs. Hemans' line, "The Bowl of Liberty," is elucidated by Plutarch's striking account of the commemoration of Platæa when after a visit to the sepulchres the Souls of the Heroes were invited to the sacrificial feast, and the chief magistrate, filling a bowl, gave the toast: "I drink to those who gave their lives for the liberties of Greece."

No better school prizes than these two little volumes could be given in our Board schools, and it would be as well if both could be issued alike in more elaborate and in cheaper forms, illustrated editions for Christmas and other gift-books, and at the price of Mr. Dent's admirable library.

Women are very disloyal to each other—I reiterate the words. Neither Madame Bodichon, the noble foundress of Girton College, nor Amelia B. Edwards, the erudite explorer in recondite literary

fields, to say nothing of their brimful lives, has found a biographer. Thanks to the courtesy of Sir Sidney Lee, I have been permitted to pay each a humble tribute in his great *Dictionary of Biography*. No other woman I could ever discover has ever put pen to paper for the purpose of recalling such exemplars. No, in advancing years I am more and more struck with the littleness and self-seeking of my sex, and less and less desirous of seeing them either in Parliament or holding any public office of responsibility whatever.

VIII

AN HOUR WITH MISS BRADDON

A SIMPLE, dignified figure, sterling goodness evidenced by look, word, and slightest action, absolutely unspoiled by fame and "wealth beyond the dreams of avarice," such was my impression of the story-teller whose fifty volumes are popular in every civilised language.

On learning that my great contemporary had settled at Bexhill for the summer, I wrote begging her to favour me with a visit. Most cordial was her reply. She had consulted her coachman; he in turn had consulted drivers familiar with the road, and her horses, they said, would never be able to climb to my terrace on the East Hill, still less would they have the nerve to descend so steep a bend. Again and *pro tem.* a still graver obstacle stood in the way: her maid was away on holiday, and no one else could lift her, crippled as she was with rheumatism, in and out of the carriage. Would I not give her the pleasure of my company to tea some afternoon instead?

So on the day and at the hour fixed I duly

reached the railway station, of course expecting to be met. But no such thing. Pampered darlings must they have been, that pair of horses, I presume, only put in harness once a day. So after waiting a few minutes I hired a cab, with orders to be fetched in an hour and a half.

Mrs. Maxwell was installed in a very handsome set of apartments fronting the sea. On my name being announced, a momentary awkwardness preceded a genial hour.

A tall lady, wearing rich black silk, rose from her seat with a puzzled, interrogatory look. Then she turned to a young lady having a little boy by her side. Who was I, and how came I to be there? her face said. The pleasant daughter-in-law succeeded at last in making matters clear, tea was served, and over it we chatted in friendliest fashion. Mrs. Maxwell had now attained a dignity not perhaps much coveted among ourselves but by Frenchwomen considered the highest her sex can attain. An imperial crown, the literary reputation of a de Sévigné, the unmatchable beauty of a Ninon de Lenclos are a mere snap of the fingers compared to that enthronement—namely, the fact of being a grandmother. To be a mother, all very well; but to be a grandmother! One must hear a Frenchwoman pronounce the words *Je suis grand'mère* to realise what such a pinnacle of glory means to our friends over the water. Miss Braddon—how

can we call her by any other name?—seemed to know me best maybe only as a writer upon France and French subjects. Almost pathetically she alluded to her own travels, sojourns at Swiss and other health resorts crowded in their season with cosmopolitan globe-trotters.

"Ah!" I said, "could you only see as I have seen French schoolboys devouring your translated novels in the hour of recreation," and having drifted into French topics she liked to hear more. It seemed so new a thing to her, that almost second nationality of mine, a country in which a good third of my working years have been spent. One fact I ought to have told her. By no means a deep psychologist, for the most part describing men and women as she found them, she would have learned with interest that my maternal grandmother was of French Huguenot stock, the family settling in England after the committal of the greatest and most atrocious crime in modern history—namely, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

But we chatted pleasantly enough, and all too soon came the hour of departure. We never met again, but a little later Henry James told me how kindly she had received him at her Richmond home, and what gratification the visit had afforded himself.

An endearing recollection, that meeting with an author whose very first stories—*Ralph the Bailiff*, and others—had charmed me two generations before.

Why has this first-rate story-teller had no biographer? Her long life is not without lessons alike to wise and simple literary aspirants. Several circumstances are especially noteworthy in her career. In the first place, she did not wake up to find herself famous like the authoresses of *The Heavenly Twins* and *Robert Elsmere.* She did not win the crown without running the race. And in the second, there was no falling-off in the quality of her work. Her fiftieth novel was every bit as engrossing and as well put together as her first. There were no second or third bests, no *Count Robert of Paris* to put *Waverley* to the blush. And if, as has been written, her stories appeal to "that low vice, curiosity," would not humanity sink to the level of animals without it? Wherein else does the higher differ from the lower in creation?

A word or two about Mrs. Maxwell's early life and career. The daughter of a solicitor, she was born in Soho Square in 1837, and when a mere child began to write stories and verses, getting poetic effusions, political squibs, and parodies into the Poet's Corner of provincial newspapers, later on contributing stories to *Temple Bar* and other popular monthlies. Her comedietta called *Loves of Arcadia* was produced at the Royal Strand Theatre in 1860, but without success. Nor was *Garibaldi and other Poems* that followed more fortunate. But in 1862 her story of the golden-haired murderess,

Lady Audley's Secret, made every publisher in London her liege lord. In three months were sold no less than eight editions of the three-volume edition published at a guinea and a half. *Aurora Floyd*, 1863, which was no less sensational, proved hardly less popular.

One secret of such enormous and world-wide popularity is doubtless the wholesomeness and cleanness of Miss Braddon's stories. Therein vice is never sugared. No page, no sentence, tempts youthful readers to lift the forbidden veil, by hook or by crook to attain the knowledge that is as the poison of asps, "a stumbling-block before the children." Can any writer desire a nobler epitaph?

I add that following this happy afternoon came two charming reminders. Shortly afterwards, and on separate occasions, I received by post carefully packed boxes of rare and beautiful hothouse flowers from Bexhill. Another touch of a large, generous nature.

I add her letter to me, just her kind unspoiled self in every line. But what would she have made of C. P.?

WINCHESTER HOUSE,
Monday.

MY DEAR MISS EDWARDS,—It is so kind of you to leave your eagle's nest and to give me and mine the pleasure of seeing you next Thursday afternoon.

I hope the day may be as fine as it is at this

hour—a lovely blue sky after a tropical storm last night.—*À jeudi*, yours most sincerely,

MARY MAXWELL.

P.S.—I should have loved to know Coventry Patmore. He was one of my lost opportunities, as I believe we were living near him in Hampshire for some years—off and on. Alas! much of my life has been made of lost opportunities.

IX

A FRENCH TALK WITH LORD KITCHENER

We Suffolkers have a quite touchingly clannish feeling. It can no longer be said that two of my countryfolks chance-met on the top of a London bus would immediately recognise each other by their "drant"—in other words, drawl; their instructions to the conductor, beginning at C major and ending two octaves higher, at once identifying them to the knowing. School Boards and cosmopolitan habits for the most part have changed all this, but were I to-day colloguing with contemporaries in my native village near Ipswich I could "drant" with the best of them.

I well remember an incident that occurred some years ago when revisiting native haunts with my cousin Amelia. In her ever polished and ornate speech she asked of a hobbledehoy if we were on the right road to Bramford. Had she spoken in the language of the Pharaohs, he could not have opened his mouth wider or looked more hopelessly bewildered.

I immediately asked the way after his own fashion, raising my voice three gamuts, whereupon the lad's face brightened. He told us we were all right and pulled his forelock, the local form of touching the hat, as he received thanks and twopence.

From the butcher's great son Cardinald Wolsey downwards, Suffolk has shown a noble roll-call, and in 1895 was founded the London Society of East Anglians, its object being the promotion of good fellowship and pleasant intercourse among persons born in or connected with Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire.[1]

The initiator, I believe, anyhow the warm supporter of the movement, was my distinguished friend and fellow-countyman, if I may coin the expression, Sir Arthur Spurgeon. No relation, be it mentioned, is the head of the great publishing house of Cassell to the renowned preacher and wholesale converter of sinners, whom I have heard hold forth in melodramatic style to thousands in the Ipswich Corn Exchange. Nor, it seems, have any ancestors of this name been recorded in history, a precedence always in some degree diminishing the fame of after generations.

And now the East Anglian Society was to celebrate the greatest day in its history.

On his triumphant return, the great Suffolker,

[1] Offices: 10 Vineyard Hill, Wimbledon, S.W.19.

vanquisher of the Mahdi and hero of Khartoum, had accepted an invitation to a banquet offered him by its members.

I was just then the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Harrison in Westbourne Terrace. In order not to disturb the household at a very late hour, also to save myself much fatigue, I engaged a bed at the great hotel facing the Thames, scene of the banquet. I took care, of course, to be in good time, and after making my toilet was duly guided to the place reserved for me, near friends, in the enormous dining-hall.

We were all in our places with bated breath awaiting the hero, and far too much on the *qui vive* to exchange whispers, when at last the tension came to an end, the band burst into *God save the Queen*, followed by *See the conquering hero comes*, and our guest appeared, a striking figure enough in himself, but made more so by decorations blazing on his breast.

In his early prime, eminently handsome, tall of stature and magnificently proportioned, Lord Kitchener might say after French fashion that he had chosen his parents with the utmost discretion. As he confronted us, graciously acknowledging burst after burst of tumultuous cheers, a glance told you that here was a man of iron indeed. No one could behold that stern countenance without comprehending the terror it had inspired among subordinate

races, and how, as before the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, strong men had quailed before the gaze.

How I wish I could describe the most wonderful eyes it has ever been my lot to behold and look into at leisure. But I give up the task. Wherein indeed lies the mystery, the whole man, the whole woman, but in the eye?

We fortunate ones—that is to say, East Anglians—dined whilst admiring crowds looked on. Just as Parisians gathered round the Tuileries to see Louis Philippe, his spouse, and numerous progeny fall to, which they good-humouredly did in public, by no means disliking the compliment, so we were gazed at as we ate and drank. On each side of the hall ran a gallery, to-night filled with visitors of the hotel. Not only had they the gratification of seeing Lord Kitchener eat, but of hearing Sir (then Mr.) Rider Haggard and one or two others respond to the regulation toasts.

These very briefly over, we adjourned to the reception room, and here the guest of the evening held his court. One by one all present had the honour of shaking hands with him, and, owing to happy circumstances, I was privileged beyond the rest. I had whispered a word in Sir Arthur Spurgeon's ear. I wanted a few minutes' conversation with the guest of the evening. Could I obtain the privilege?

No sooner was my favour asked than granted.

"I was particularly anxious to have this opportunity, Lord Kitchener," I began, "of conveying to you the congratulations of a French colleague. My old and valued friend, the late General Nicola, former Military Governor of Paris, learned from my letter of a few days back that I was to be here to-night. But permit me to repeat his exact words." I then went on in French, for I well knew Lord Kitchener's familiarity with the language. "I rejoice, dear friend," the General wrote, "that you are to have the honour of meeting the great soldier whose achievements have added so splendid a page to the glorious history of British arms."

Having glided into French, my interlocutor did the same, and for some minutes we chatted genially on—were we not both Suffolkers, knit together by an almost fraternal tie? Lord Kitchener spoke French as to the manner born and without the faintest English accent, which perhaps is more than I could say of myself!

Meantime we were the objects of quite legitimate curiosity and equally legitimate envy. For I was the only guest to whom more than a mere exchange of compliments was granted. But I felt bound to make room for others, so tore myself away, as I passed on a lady stopping me.

"If not impertinent, *may* I ask what you were saying to Lord Kitchener?" she asked. "He looked so gratified and smiled so pleasantly."

"We talked of France," I replied, and hurried by. Yes, I had made Lord Kitchener smile, had softened that stern visage as, I learned afterwards, children could soften it.

A day or two later, a leading lady in London society entertained the lion of the hour at a garden party in Eaton Square.

"Imagine it!" she told me afterwards. "Some of the prettiest, most striking debutantes of the last London season were there, but Lord Kitchener had no eyes for these. He devoted himself all the time to my quiet little Elizabeth, just twelve! Fancy such a man being fond of children! No 'catch of the season' is Lord Kitchener. Vainly any feminine snare set in sight of such a bird!"

After a triumph the usual swallowing of humble pie!

Next day my good friend, the late Professor Beesly, lunched in Westbourne Terrace, and the topic of last night's banquet immediately cropped up. "Did Lord Kitchener show you the Mahdi's head?" Professor Beesly cruelly asked, evidently shocked at the fact that I should have countenanced such a celebration.

The Positivists as a body had protested against the Soudan campaign.

X

RECOLLECTIONS OF VISCOUNT MORLEY

A Great Book[1]

This eagerly awaited work has not disappointed public expectation. Deeply interesting as such a record was sure to be, it is educational in the literary sense of the word, epigrammatic, witty, and, last but not least, very entertaining. Grave, momentous pages are relieved by delightful touches of humour, and the author does not hesitate to let his readers enjoy a smile at his own expense.

It was in the early seventies that I first met Mr. John Morley at the house of his friend, the late distinguished Professor Beesly. The guest of the evening had already attained a brilliant position in the world of letters. Indeed, no writers outside imaginative literature stood higher. His *Edmund Burke*, *Voltaire*, and *Compromise* had already appeared. He was editor of *The Fortnightly Review*

[1] *Recollections by John Viscount Morley, O.M., Hon. Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.* In two volumes, sixth edition. Macmillan, London.

and of the "English Men of Letters" series. Finest personalities are often the least describable. Add to the type of an English gentleman and a scholar the qualities of reserve, adaptability to the circumstances of the moment, and an utter absence of attempts to shine, such was my dinner-table impression of Mr. Morley.

Quite naturally the conversation of such a quartette turned upon books and authors. I well remember with what enthusiasm the editor spoke of a recent work by Thomas Hardy, maybe the celebrated *Far from the Madding Crowd*. I always play the part of listener when in good company, and I don't think that I had then read the story or I might have here had my innings. Being a practical farmer I could have showed how, like Tom, Dick, and Harry, or the wisest, the novelist made himself ridiculous when talking of things he did not understand. His heroine Bathsheba is described as offering her own wheat for sale in the Market Hall, precincts closed to women farmers as rigidly as the other sex are shut out of the harem! Like my Suffolk neighbours, widows and spinsters having their names on their wagons, my samples of corn in little brown paper bags were shown by my headman, and among the more important of us by a farm-bailiff. Hardy, by the way a writer much too Zola-esque to please me, and his pictures of farming life are exactly the

opposite of my own and thoroughly practical experiences.

The second time I met Mr. Morley was on the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, 1897. Upon that occasion, a soirée was given by women writers, each being permitted to invite a guest of the other sex. Some lady had been fortunate enough to secure Mr. Morley, then editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, Member for Blackburn, Irish Secretary, and close friend and supporter of Mr. Gladstone. A short, very short conversation is my last recollection of one to whose editorial encouragement I owed much. No one had taken more interest in my studies of French life, and we talked for just five minutes about Arthur Young, "that wise and honest traveller," as he had styled him, whose famous *Travels in France* I had edited for Bohn's Library. No more. But it was something.

Although savouring of egotism I add a few pleasant memories. Mr. Morley's editorial letters, of which I had many, were always short and to the purpose. Of my novel, *Love and Mirage* (now published by Hutchinsons in their cheap series), he wrote "graceful, interesting, and pathetic," and he accepted for *The Pall Mall Gazette* and *Macmillan's Magazine* many of my sketches of French and German life. Most of the former have since been incorporated in my recent volumes on French life and literature. Of the latter I am about to reissue

the series entitled, "Letters from an Island," giving an account of a summer sojourn in the island of Rügen, with some very poignant notes of German society and an anecdote of naval officers who landed and had a drinking bout on the shore.

Memorable had been the intervening years in Mr. Morley's career, and more memorable still were to follow.

In *The Fortnightly Review* for January of the present year another great Victorian has paid a noble tribute to his friend, without at the same time withholding a word of criticism regarding his *Recollections* as a literary work. The title, urges Mr. Frederic Harrison, should be *Recollections and Meditations*. "Half of the book," he writes, "is literature that may rank with that of our great essayists from Bacon to Burke. Half of it is history interspersed with memories of our leading statesmen. It is the political testament of a statesman who has held great offices in critical times and has been at the helm in many a storm. Again, it is the lifelong study of literature by one who now for fifty years has had no superior in the prose-writing of this age."

"The defect," he adds, "perhaps inevitable, of the volume is a certain discursiveness, of *disjecta membra*. The narrative is not, as the French say, *coulant*; connecting links are wanting, we are too suddenly plunged from one subject into another.

At the same time, there is a charm in these incongruities."

Thus when writing to Lord Minto, Viceroy in 1906, himself being Secretary of State for India, he rings the changes on grave political matters thus:

"I am the least of a sportsman that ever was born, and the sight of a tiger, except behind the bars of the Zoological Gardens, would frighten me out of my wits; but I do rejoice to think that you, who, I sincerely believe, are the most heavily burdened public servant in the Empire, are seeing the fresh life of the jungle, the Zemindars (land holders), and all the rest that you so very pleasantly describe."

Perhaps the most valuable pages of Lord Morley's work are those in his second volume devoted to India. Many chapters, it is hoped, will be translated into the vernacular. Aristotle has named magnanimity as the crowning virtue, and certainly the very quality here needed. Nobly did the Secretary of State protest against harsh and repressive measures.

Lord Morley is, certes, no courtier. Has he not in his first volume spoken of Queen Victoria's chilling reception of himself? It is pleasant to find from jottings here and there that he was a *persona grata* at the court of the great Edward VII. and of his son. Thus in the same year he writes:

"I'm bidden to Windsor for four days—very agreeble always, only not *rest.*"

Here is a gleaning from Lord Morley's sheaf of dicta, epigrams, and witticisms, many of these as certain to be incorporated into the English tongue as have been those of his great forerunners. The "Time is money" of Franklin; the "Comparisons are odious" of Shakespeare; the "Enough is as good as a feast" of Heywood, to come to later times; the "Handsome is that handsome does" of Goldsmith; the "Chip of the old block" of Burke; the "Hand and glove" of Cowper; the "Keep your powder dry" of Colonel Blacker and of our Victorian age; the "Muscular Christianity" of Kingsley; the "Rich in all—saving common sense" of Tennyson; the "Sweetness and light" of Swift, popularised by Matthew Arnold; and of the Georgians have we not goodly promise?

From Lord Morley's great book I quote the following many citations, of course belonging to the Edwardian period:

"We talked away without saying anything, as men are so curiously apt to do."

"So-and-so looks as if he were well up in his business and as if he minded that before other things—the beginning of virtue in this world."

"What's the use of a historic sense if you don't recollect your history?"

"The proper memory for a politician is one

that knows what to remember and what to forget."

Of a magazine article on himself :

"It was the ill-natured word for a defect when the good-natured word would have done quite as well."

"I'm always finding the commonplace is the true essential."

"All modern history and tradition associate empires with war."

"War ostracises, demoralises, brutalises reason."

"Certain people with a genius for picking up pins."

"People of good temper are not always kind people."

Philanthropists and agitators :

"Most of what is decently good in our curious world has been done by these two much-abused sets of folk."

"Our master, the Man in the Street."

"Time is one thing, and eternity is another."

"A shining day worth living for."

"Waste of public money is like the Sin against the Holy Ghost."

"That most tiresome of all things, an Act of Parliament."

Of Keir Hardie, 1907 :

"Perhaps it is only these men with unscrupulous preconceptions—knocking their heads against stone walls—who force the world along."

"I demur, in the uplifted spirit of the Trodden Worm."

Concerning a stormy scene forthcoming in the House of Commons:

"I shall survive in some shape or another, and even if I don't, the sun will rise with his usual punctuality next morning."

Under similar conditions:

"We will not bid good-morrow to the Devil until we meet him."

"Do not count me a Slow Coach."

Concerning an emblazoned Indian inscription, 1909, promising Lord Ripon, Lord Minto, and himself a life in the Indian heart to all eternity:

"Time is quite enough for me, and you (Lord Minto) are welcome to my share of the other, as well as your own."

"Deep is history in man, even although he may seldom be alive to it."

"The humane attraction of a hale old age."

"Dramas are not made by words but by situations."

"Loose logic is not enough to turn men somnambulists."

"Needs of life and circumstance are the constant spur."

Of the Victorian age:

"New truths were welcomed in free minds, and free minds make brave men."

Of his pet dog:

"My little humble friend squats on her haunches, looking wistfully up, eager to resume her endless hunt after she knows not what, just like the chartered metaphysician. So to my home in the fading twilight."

A most poetic ending to pre-eminently *the* book of 1917.

XI

"MARK RUTHERFORD" (WILLIAM HALE WHITE)

DOUBTLESS with all the modesty of true genius, Mr. Hale White would have plumed himself more upon his comparatively unknown contribution to scholarship than to the 120,000th edition of *Mark Rutherford.*

For this "walker by the way," gloveless, sunburnt, homely-looking, who at first sight one would set down as a farmer, before settling down a few doors from my dwelling, had translated Spinoza's famous *Tractatus*, adding to a most lucid rendering very valuable notes.[1]

This is a beautiful book, and it is characteristic of the author that he allowed a woman to revise his work. But littleness could not enter into the composition of such a man, and none more caustic in his deprecation of it in others.

I well remember his disgust when shopping in Hastings one day. A carriage and pair drew up,

[1] Fisher Unwin, 1895, is the date of my edition. Translated by W. Hale White. Translation revised by Amelia Hutchinson Stirling, M.A. (Edin.).

and straightway out flew the assistants, leaving himself, their customer, at the counter. *His* time, of course, was of no consequence in their eyes, the idle loungers must not be kept waiting a single second.

He could also be sardonically humorous. One morning we happened to meet, his daughter being with him, at the Clock Tower, behind which lies a small open space.

"If you or I had lived in times of burning alive for heresy, what crowds would be gathered there to behold the spectacle of us two at the stake," he said. A few minutes later the West End omnibus we awaited arrived, and Miss White and myself were about to step in when a private carriage was driven up, and so closely to the pavement as to threaten our feet.

"What the devil are you about?" broke forth the irate philosopher, and he gave the presumptuous lackeys the trouncing they so richly deserved. Snobbery of this kind is not perhaps more conspicuous in Hastings than in other health resorts, but, Heaven knows, lick-spittling and sycophancy are rampant everywhere. Will high and low, rich and poor, wise and simple acquire new standards of excellence, new mental and moral valuations after the great lessoning of the world's war?

I always regretted that I could not find pleasure in, could hardly indeed wade through Hale White's

novels, so-called. He was by no means an uncheerful man, but his series of introspective studies are in the melancholy to morbidness. Life to him was pictured as a long-spun-out threnody—Why was I born? How much better not to have been born, one felt to be the underlying sentiment. Perhaps the secret of his fabulously numerous—the great Sir Walter's did not go off more rapidly—editions is thus accounted for by a clever friend: "Folks are cheered up by finding how much worse off are many others than themselves," she said. For myself, I consider that they are more likely by far to make people cut their throats or jump into the nearest pond handy—to get "anywhere, anywhere out of the world," as Hood's poem runs. But there is no accounting for tastes—nor opinions—upon any mortal thing!

XII

A TRIO OF PIONEERS

"Pioneers! O pioneers!"—WALT WHITMAN.

THREE noble pioneers, each in a quite different field, each of whom at one time I saw much, here deserve many pages. But the careers alike of Rose Davenport-Hill, Frances Power Cobbe, and Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., have been already told and retold by more competent hands. I will therefore only say of these good friends a very few words.

Were any of my sex—except foreign opera singers—decreed a niche in the national Walhalla, the above-named trio should surely be there commemorated, Catherine Booth, the apostolic mother of the Salvation Army, and Josephine Butler, friend of the fallen, keeping them company.

We must not hope for such recognition at the hands of Dean and Chapter. Well might a Frenchwoman to whom I was introducing the Poets' Corner in 1896 exclaim with astonishment:

"George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, absent—the only woman of the

Victorian epoch memorialised within these walls a foreign opera singer!"

A benevolent, admirable woman in her way was "the Swedish Nightingale," and her voice was a goodly gift of nature. But what tittle of a claim, she said, had Jenny Lind, afterwards Frau Goldschmidt, to a niche in Westminster Abbey?[1]

The greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, one of its most illustrious novelists, a poet famous as those two, shut out of the national Pantheon! an alien prima donna being adjudged worthier of place therein than John Stuart Mill, Charles Reade, and countless others, by sacerdotal authorities! What will posterity think of the anomaly?

My almost lifelong friend, Rose Davenport-Hill, belonged to that innumerable clan of Hills, headed by their chieftain the great Sir Rowland. Without tale are the public workers of this veritable tribe, and without tale—*i.e.* innumerable—are the family ramifications. There are Davenport-Hills, Birkbeck-Hills, Berkeley-Hills, also Australian-Hills, these again subdivided by affixes.

And one of the second dynasty, herself an indefatigable pioneer, is still among us. Florence Davenport-Hill (daughter of the well-known eminent Recorder of Birmingham) will ever be

[1] Yes, she *had* a claim, for noble was the life of this so gifted woman, both as an artist and a citizen and a woman, but of course this was unknown to the outspoken Frenchwoman.

remembered as the friend and champion of women's suffrage, of workhouse children, and later on as an active supporter of Children's Courts.

To Florence Davenport-Hill, on her eighty-ninth birthday, 1918, and apropos of the Bill just passed according women the parliamentary vote, I sent the following quatrain :

> "Dear champion of the children's cause,
> Amender of unrighteous laws,
> Years crown your efforts as they roll,
> Now you'll frisk gaily to the poll."

She also for many years filled the office of guardian of the poor.

Her sister's work on the London School Board is too well known to educationists to need recapitulation. One of several women elected to the first body, greatly to J. S. Mill's rejoicing (see his recently published *Correspondence*, 2 vols., 1911), she retained her seat for many years, aiding the cause of national education with unfailing devotion, ploddingness, and, marvellous to relate, gusto!

Therein lay the gist of her career. To this enthusiast came no disillusion. The School Board remained dear and engaging to the last. Day after day she would set out from Belsize Avenue, neither hail, rain, snow or blow, nor blackness Tartarean damping her ardour, returning to the seven o'clock dinner as alert as when starting, and ever with something piquant to relate. The humour of routine and

red tape would be delightfully brought out by one who nevertheless was herself a routinist. No innovator, no inventor, was this loyal member; her business, as she used to say, was to support the policy of the Board. This was ever done wholeheartedly and from high standpoints.

Her wit would occasionally enliven very sleepy sittings. As she never made unnecessary speeches, she used to put a piece of knitting in her bag, plying her needles whilst listening. On being criticised for such unconventional proceeding, Miss Davenport-Hill remarked:

"This is the first time that I ever remember hearing a woman reproached for using her tongue too little and her hands too much."

As a constant visitor to the Brentford Industrial Schools, her work was more especially valuable. And with what a glow she must have received the many tributes from "old boys" in after years! Not many months before her death one of these wrote from the Colonies: "You have been as a mother to me, and my start in life and present well-being are your doing." Could any fame or applause bring greater satisfaction to a public worker, especially to a Hill.

Of Elizabeth Blackwell, for the past thirty years my Hastings neighbour and anteriorly my good friend, there is little new to say. Her early struggles as a medical student are well known to

all interested in the subject of women doctors, and have been modestly but tellingly told by herself in a volume well meriting reprint (*Pioneer Work*: Longmans).

As has repeatedly been the case with her friend, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, the laurels of her winning have been placed on other brows. And now, "being very patient being dead," as Coventry Patmore beautifully wrote, unless her biographical record is very carefully prepared, the same mistakes are sure to recur.

One incident of this most honourable career, perhaps new to many, I will mention.

When, three-quarters of a century ago, a handsome Civil List Pension—I believe of £300 a year—was offered to Harriet Martineau, she made the dignified reply that, whilst most grateful to Her Majesty's Government, the labours of earlier years had enabled her to provide for her old age. Elizabeth Blackwell, who began life as a teacher of the pianoforte, thereby supporting her younger sisters, in old age could have made an identical reply to similar overtures. Retiring from practice soon after reaching her sixtieth year, she purchased a pretty little residence at Hastings, therein enjoying ease and dignity for yet another generation. No woman of Victoria's reign has bequeathed a finer, more practical, more disinterested lesson to her younger sisters.

COLLEGE
LIBRARY

The wise and witty "Bagshot" of *The Westminster Gazette* lately discoursed with much finesse and pertinence on "the happy ending."

Frances Power Cobbe's life-story is an illustration of the felicitous *dénouement*, the happy ending. Most of us know how she devoted herself to the cause of helpless animals—in other words, the cause of anti-vivisection. With indomitable courage and unshaken faith she pursued her way, having taken to heart the Platonic, the final lesson: "As you properly conceive light and sight to be like the sun but not to be the sun, so you must conceive knowledge and truth to be of the nature of the Supreme Good, but not either the one or other of them to be that Supreme Good" (*Republic*, book vi., Whewell's translation). I have ever held this passage of Plato to be an unanswerable argument against vivisection in any form.

Impaired health, loss of a beloved lifelong companion, diminished income, could not depress such a nature as hers, but "the happy ending" came welcomely all the same.

One morning she opened a letter from an unknown solicitor, saying that a deceased client, like herself, an ardent anti-vivisectionist, had bequeathed her a handsome fortune. So for the rest of her days, not only could she enjoy ease, comfort, and the luxury of benevolence, but also the power of propaganda. The capital at her death was willed

to the cause for which she had sacrificed so much.

Not very long before the end I received an affectionate mid-winter invitation to her Welsh retreat, one of the many invitations, alas! most regretfully refused by me of late years. North Wales in the season of snowfalls! Not even the blazing logs and geniality of such a hostess could have warmed me there in December.

But how happy we should have been together! With what quips, cranks, and wanton wiles should I have been beguiled! What interminable talks of old friends, old travel, and of the causes so dear to both! And we appreciated each other—that being once said of intercourse, all is said!

I cannot do better than precede my colophon with this noble life-story of "the happy ending."

XIII

MUDIE

FOREMOST among pioneers must be placed the founder of Mudie's Library, a name suggesting pleasant memories alike to high and low, rich and poor, Radical or Tory, from end to end of the British Dominions, *i.e.* a good third of the globe, and counting a fourth of its entire population.

Between the years 1890 and 1900 I was staying with relations in North London, and used to shake hands with Mr. Mudie after exchanging books at New Oxford Street. Every morning he drove past my brother-in-law's house on his way into town, and two little imps of nephews used to waylay the phaeton and get the treat of a lift. Mr. Mudie rented a very handsome house standing in large grounds at Muswell Hill. I do not remember that I was ever within its walls, nor have I a very definite remembrance of the courteous gentleman of the old school I often chatted with in his sanctum; it is a matter of regret to me that I never carried away any memorial of our friendship, neither a portrait nor autographed volume,

nor anything in the shape of a memento, those keepsakes which are as capital letters to Saints' Days and Festivals in the Calendar. I am indebted to his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Arthur O. Mudie, for the following account of him:

"Charles Edward Mudie was born at 5 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, October 18, 1818, the youngest of many sons of a Scotch bookseller. Among the habitués of his father's bookshop were the two Hazlitts, Madame D'Arblay, and Charles Lamb. He was sent to a school kept by a retired officer who had lost a leg at Waterloo, and who was more successful as a disciplinarian than as an educator; but the boy's real education came from the mother who had taught him very early to read. At seven years old he could just reach the 'S' shelf in his father's shop, and Charles Lamb coming in one day noticed the child sitting on the floor behind the counter, deep in a volume of Shakespeare. (Scott had already been sampled.) My father well remembered the kindly pat on the head and the dark eyes that looked into his face when Lamb took him on his knee and asked him about the play he had been reading.

"With so many elder brothers there was no place for him in his father's business, and before he was twenty he had opened a bookselling and stationer's business in King Street, Bloomsbury. This was soon frequented by students of the newly founded London University, who told other young men of literary tastes that Mudie knew something

of the *inside* of the books he sold. Finding that needy scholars longed to study books they were too poor to buy, it struck him that a circulating library which could provide other literature than fiction, up to that time the only stock of such libraries, would be a boon to such readers. He brought down his own private library and put the books in the window. Within twenty-four hours every volume was in circulation, and he ventured on his first order from the publishers of 'select' books, this being then the trade term for history, travel, science, or belles-lettres. This was in 1843.

"The parlour from which the books had been fetched became a 'rendezvous' for many of these young men, and they held there a 'coffee symposium.' Among the men who gathered there were Richard Hutton, Frederick Tennyson and Charles Tennyson Turner, David Masson, and, later, several of the Italian exiles then in London.

"He had already published for the first time in England Emerson's Essay, to which he gave the title, *Man Thinking*.

"In 1844 he published the first edition in England of James Russell Lowell's poems, and, with the audacity of six-and-twenty, he, in the same year, published for Mazzini his pamphlet on the Bandiera incident.

"A few days before starting on his fatal Arctic expedition Sir John Franklin came in to choose books for the voyage, and among the earliest subscribers were Anna Swanwick, the Wedgwoods, Tom Hughes, and F. Denison Maurice.

"His tastes were strongly for music and art, and he was the friend and earliest patron of many of the younger artists of his day. He possessed the first exhibited pictures of Fred Walker, Albert and Henry Moore, Stacy Marks, and Vicat Cole. In politics he was a Liberal; he was a brilliant chess player, but his chief recreation he found in travel. As a young man he travelled over great parts of Britain on foot. After his marriage in 1847 he seldom passed a year without visiting the Continent, chiefly Italy and the Mediterranean, was several times in Greece, travelled in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, and made a visit to relations in a remote district of Asia Minor, in all regions making friends with the people and interesting himself in their life and customs.

"With wife and children he was in Italy during the War of Liberation in 1859, which his warm sympathies with the cause of the Risorgimento made trebly interesting to him.

"Of his intercourse with authors it would be impossible to give a concise account. Of foreign librarians and publishers his most friendly connections were with Vieusseux of Florence, Von Gerold of Vienna, and Baron Tauchnitz of Leipzig.

"He died, after a long illness from paralysis, in October 1890."

His forefathers were Scandinavians, the patronymic Mudadi meaning bold, courageous. The great librarian was eminently a domestic character, eschewing alike politics, officialism, and

matters that would take him from his business and his family. Foreign travel was his favourite relaxation, and on their travels in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, Mr. and Mrs. Mudie were accompanied by their children and nurses. It was not till the number of the little ones overpassed five that they left them behind, or, as his daughter expresses it, "made a selection." Once, and once only, did the parents travel by themselves. To celebrate their silver wedding they visited Egypt and Palestine.

No more generous or thoughtful employer ever lived than the magnate of Muswell Hill, as in his last years Mr. Mudie might be called. Patriarchal as a Scotch laird, his fine mansion resembled those ancestral halls we read of, in its precincts being housed several generations. But his innate benevolence was pathetically attested by those to whom his only relation was that of employer and employed. When his chief binder lay dying, his last request was that he should be buried as near as possible to his beloved chief.

Here is another beautiful story.

During a serious illness of Mr. Mudie it came to light that one of his messengers, an old Indian soldier, Irishman and Roman Catholic, had been for weeks paying for Masses at Brompton Oratory for his master's recovery, and on his return to business the good old man completely broke down, so

overcome was he by joy. Never was a "great captain of industry" more cherished by those to whom they were indebted for a start in life or a help by the way.

I am gratified to find that although I have no vivid remembrance of my host and hostess at Muswell Hill, my visit is not forgotten by the present head of the house.

"My memory is still good enough to remember your visit when I was quite a youngster," writes Mr. Arthur O. Mudie. "I remember also the reverence and awe with which you were announced. And I know quite well with what an amusing little blush my father would have heard of you naming him in your Victorian memories."

He was one of those sensitive men who *must* blush at such tributes.

XIV

MR. JOHN MURRAY

It is fitting that some pages should be devoted, rather should I say dedicated, to the head of the greatest publishing house in the world. Next in rank to the firm in Albemarle Street stands that of Hachette, Paris, to whose members I am hardly less indebted. My indebtedness to the first is twofold. In the first place, the lucky accident that led to my revision of the famous *Handbook to France* brought me friends in every corner of "the splendid hexagon," rendering it for many years my second home. In the second, those delightful sojourns and entrancing studies have won for me the recognition of the Third Republic and a title of honour I regard as one of the proudest I could receive.

How it came about that I undertook to bring Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in France*, parts 1 and 2, up to date, I do not precisely remember. I rather think that it was due to an account I sent Mr. Murray of Dijon—its celebrated gingerbread, the invention of a Duke of Burgundy, its equally celebrated mustard, pills, and other manufactures,

and last but not least, the famous wine cellars of M. Paul Guillemot. Be this as it may, Mr. Murray sent me a very handsome acknowledgment of the voluntary contribution, and on my return to England I called upon him at his request. My first visit was followed by others, the result being that I undertook a task profitable and pleasant in the extreme. A thorough revision of the original *Handbook* necessitated not only a comprehensive knowledge of French history but also of France itself. I had, therefore, before me many wanderings, many in out-of-the-way regions. Brittany I already knew,[1] also Auvergne,[2] also Nîmes and Avignon, having French companions on the road, and at each stopping-place the welcome of a French roof. Thus it came about that I had, so to say, the entire map of France in my pocket. To co-ordinate and render permanently useful this mass of laboriously accumulated knowledge at first hand was precisely the opportunity that Mr. John Murray and no one else could give me, and with only one reservation he gave it.

Naturally enough my name was not to appear on the title-page. What were my claims to those of the originator of the *Handbook*?

But let me begin my story at the beginning.

[1] *A Year in Western France*, Longmans, 1875, recently reprinted.

[2] "A Month in Auvergne," *Macmillan's Magazine*, about same date.

The first of the dynasty had chosen his parents with the utmost possible discretion, to cite a French phrase I love. A charming portrait of John Murray the First accompanies his biography.[1] Strange to say, the publishing house, which dates from 1768, was founded by a Lieutenant of Marines! Having retired from the service that year on half-pay, John MacMurray purchased the bookselling business of William Sandby at the sign of the "Ship," No. 32 Fleet Street, opposite St. Dunstan's Church.

John MacMurray was descended from the Murrays of Atholl. His uncle, Colonel Murray, was "out" in the rising of 1715 under the Earl of Mar, served under the Marquis of Tullibardine, the son of his chief, the Duke of Atholl, and led a regiment in the abortive fight of Sheriffmuir. After the rebellion, Colonel Murray retired to France, where he served under the exiled Duke of Ormonde, who had attached himself to the Stuart Court. The Colonel's brother Robert followed a safer course. He prefixed the "Mac" to his name, settled in Edinburgh, adopted the law as a profession, and became a Writer to the Signet. He had five children, the youngest of whom was the John above mentioned, born in 1745. He entered the Royal Marines, but after the Treaty of Paris, signed twenty years later, retired on half-pay, dropped the prefix

[1] See *A Publisher and his Friends*, by the late Samuel Smiles, LL.D., new and revised edition. London, John Murray, 1910.

"Mac," and announced himself to the public in the following terms:

"John Murray, successor to Mr. Sandby (whose daughter he had married), Bookseller and Stationer at No. 32 over against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street, London, sells all new Books and Publications. Fits up Public or Private Libraries in the neatest manner with Books of the choicest Editions, the best Print and the richest Bindings. Also executes East India or foreign Commissions by an assortment of Books and Stationery, suited to the Market or Purpose for which it is destined: all at the most reasonable rates."

The portrait of John Murray the First, which forms the frontispiece, is interesting. No trace here of the gallant sailor who urged his friend Falconer of the *Shipwreck* to become his partner. We should at once set down the sitter as a man of thought rather than of action, a scholar, a critic, a philosopher, anything indeed but one of those Mariners of England to whom "a wet sheet and a flowing sea and a wind that follows fast" have been their element. In the reflective, expressive, and regular commanding features we see a striking likeness to the present head of this great house.

Among the first books issued by the firm were new editions of Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* and of his *History of King Henry the*

Second, in stately quartos; also Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. What would not collectors give for these curios?

Every page of these memoirs recalls some noteworthy event. Here is one. On December 20, 1784, a correspondent writes to the Rev. Mr. Whittaker:[1] "Poor Dr. Johnson's remains passed my door for interment this afternoon. They were accompanied by thirteen mourning coaches with four horses each; after these a cavalcade of the carriages of his friends. He was about to be buried in Westminster Abbey."

To John Murray the Second, Lord Byron's "My Murray," the "Anax of publishers" and founder of the *Quarterly Review*, 1778–1843, succeeded, 1808–92, the founder of the famous *Handbook*. Educated at the Charter House and Edinburgh University, he travelled all over Europe and wrote most of the European Handbooks, which were entirely original. I do not believe, writes the present head of the house, that he copied a single page from any existing work. He was a good Latin, Greek, German, and French scholar, and a special student of Geology and Architecture.

I am tempted to dwell upon one or two phases of this fascinating volume, every page teeming with

[1] Probably the Rev. John Whitaker, antiquarian and divine, 1735–1808.

interest. To pick out the plums would be a hopeless task, so redundant are they. Here is a *jeu d'esprit* of Tom Moore, apropos of this entry in his popular *Diary*: "Saw my 'Lord Edward Fitzgerald' as one of the articles to be abused of course; and this too immediately after my dinings and junketings with both editor and publisher."

THOUGHTS ON EDITORS

Editur and Edit

No! Editors don't care a button
What false and faithless thing they do,
They'll let you come and cut their mutton,
And then, they'll have a cut at you.

With Barnes I oft my dinner took,
Nay, met e'en Horace Twiss to please him;[1]
Yet Mister Barnes traduc'd my Book,
For which may his own devils seize him!

With Dr. Bowring I drank tea,
Nor of his cakes consumed a particle;
And yet the ungrateful LL.D.
Let fly at me, next week, an article.

John Wilson gave me suppers hot,
With bards of fame like Hogg and Packwood;[2]
A dose of black-strap[3] then I got,
And after, a still worse of Blackwood.

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[1] Writer and politician, 1786–1849.
[2] I can find no one of this name in encyclopædias.
[3] A mixture of spirituous liquor and molasses.

Alas! and must I close the list
With thee, my Lockhart of the *Quarterly*?
So kind with bumper in thy fist,
With pen, so very gruff and tartarly.

Now in thy parlour feasting me,
Now scribbling at me from your garret,
Till 'twixt the two, in doubt I be,
Which sourest is, thy wit or claret?

Murray the Second's transactions with Byron threw the earnings of successful contemporaries into the shade. For three cantos of "Don Juan" Mr. Murray paid £2100!

In 1826 Mr. Murray lost £26,000 through an unfortunate journalistic speculation, that of the *Representative*. On this subject he wrote to Washington Irving: "One cause of my not writing to you during a whole year was my 'entanglement,' Lady G—— says, with a newspaper which absorbed my money, and distracted and depressed my mind; but I have cut the knot of evil, which I could not untie, and am now, by the blessing of God, returned to reason and the shop."

One of the most appealing chapters in the book is that called "Sir Walter's Last Years," giving last glimpses of our beloved romancer. Sad, indeed, perhaps the saddest in literary annals, is the final stage of his glorious career. Southey's, indeed, is pitiable enough, as, worn out in body and mind, he fondled the books he could no longer read with understanding, but Sir Walter's touched the last

note in tragedy, the pen dropping from his enfeebled hand, the dismal truth dawning on his mind that the wand was broken, the wizard's charm was gone.

Most interesting is an account of Mr. Murray's literary levees in what he does not disdain to call "the shop,"[1] and no less so the correspondence during the same period, 1830–43. Here is a letter from the Countess Guiccioli, Byron's lady-love, who at this period visited London and received much kindness at the hands of Mr. Murray. After her return to Rome she wrote a long letter thanking him for a beautifully bound volume of the landscape and portrait illustrations of Lord Byron's works. She complained, however, of the portrait of herself by an artist named Brockedon.[2] "It is not resembling, and to tell the truth, my dear Mr. Murray, I wish it was so, not on account of the ugliness of the features (which is also remarkable) but particularly for having this portrait (*sic*) an expression of *stupidity* and for its being *molto antipatico*, as we say in our language. But perhaps it is not the fault of the painter, but of the original, and I am sorry for that. What is certain is, that towards such a

[1] See Mrs. Bray's *Autobiography*, 1799–1883. Her maiden name was Kempe, and she wrote a score or more of historical novels, popular in their day. A twelve-volume edition of her stories was issued in 1884.

[2] William Brockedon, artist and lecturer. See *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, by Charles MacFarlane, with an introduction by John F. Tattersall. John Murray, 1917.

creature nobody may feel inclined to be indulgent; and if she has faults and errors to be pardoned for, she will never be so on account of her *antipatia*. But please don't say so to Mr. Brockedon."

In 1842 the health of this indefatigable worker, and one to whom English literature is so much indebted, began to fail. On June 27, 1843, he passed away in his sleep at the age of sixty-five. He left behind him a spotless reputation, and among the world-wide tributes to his memory none is more touching than that of "the American Hemans," Mrs. Lydia Sigourney, who wrote from Hartford, Connecticut: "Your father's death is a loss which is mourned on this side of the Atlantic. His powerful agency on the patronage of a correct literature, which he was so well qualified to appreciate, has rendered him a benefactor in that realm of intellect which binds men together in all ages, however dissevered by political creeds or local prejudice."

With this enviable *In Memoriam* I will take leave of a worthy subject of a delightful biography, a new edition of which is welcome to all lovers of literary history.

XV

POSTSCRIPT

And now, to cite one of the most famous books of any time and in any language, "I have done with my island and all about it," may I with apology add a word?

It is a source of the greatest gratification to me that these memorials should appear in the year of my diamond jubilee, and that a new handsome edition of my first work (*The White House by the Sea*, 1857), with biographical notes and illustrations, in commemoration of so rare a literary event, is to be brought out by the house of Collins, of London and Glasgow.

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